



REIMAGINING PAN-AFRICANISM

Distinguished Mwalimu Nyerere Lecture Series 2009-2013

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With an Introduction by

ISSA SHIVJI

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Foreword

Rwekaza Mukandala

The Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Chair in Pan-African Studies was established in 2008 and with its establishment, Professor Issa Gulamhussein Shivji, was appointed to be the first Chair. As Chair, Prof. Shivji was obligated to motivate interdisciplinary research addressing socio-economic, scientific, and cultural problems facing Tanzania and the African continent. Not only was he supposed to stimulate thinking and debate that took into account the continent's historical challenges, opportunities, achievements and the future prospects it faced, but also to aim at harnessing the great minds of the University of Dar es Salaam to address problems from different perspectives and research traditions. Through hard work and dedication during his tenure as Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Chair, Prof. Shivji was able to draw extraordinary African minds to a highly respected and coveted Annual Nyerere Intellectual Festival that was held commemoratively and purposefully on the Late President's birthday. This prestigious annual event remains to be the main cornerstone in the pan-African dialogue and it has featured the Annual Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer. So far, the University has had the pleasure of hosting five Distinguished Nyerere Lecturers; Professor Wole Soyinka (2009), Prof. Samir Amin (2010), Professor Bereket Habte Selassie (2011), Professor Micere Mugo (2012) and Professor Thandika Mukandawire (2013). With the varied activities facilitated and hosted by the Chair, it gives me immense pleasure to pen the foreword of this volume that is a collection of the lectures delivered by the distinguished Nyerere Lecturers during the tenure of Professor Issa Shivji.

Reading this volume, I am not surprised at the conviction and dedication of each of the lecturers to the African Motherland. As varied as their perspectives may be, they still provide reflective solutions to some of the problems experienced in their home countries, Tanzania and Africa in general. I trust this book will add interest, identity and fresh thinking on how Africans move forward together by promoting, with high social and trust capital, Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance to enter an era where policies and actions are determined by the united agency of free Africans the world over.

The inaugural Nyerere Annual Lecture, entitled *New Imperialisms*, was delivered by the first Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer and literary giant Professor Wole Soyinka who explored the multifaceted concepts and practices of imperialism, and related these concepts to past and present human experiences around the world, including Africa. In a captivating manner, Professor Soyinka takes the reader through the complex terrain of past and present empire building tendencies, while illuminating the accompanying human sufferings. All the way through the long journey, he uses unconventional and creative approaches to understanding the workings of today's imperialism and their negative consequences on the majority of humanity. Throughout his exposition, he maintains a deep concern with the future of the majority of humanity in the face of the ever increasing injustices.

Similarly, Professor Samir Amin, the second Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer, lectured on *The Long Walk to Socialism*, which is fully reproduced in this publication. The lecturer dwelt on the phenomenon of global imperialism and outlined its far-reaching consequences on the lives of the poor peoples of the world. The lecture, however, did not start and end with desperate lamentations. Instead, Professor Amin committed much more energy in showing the fragility of the global

capitalist accumulation, the worldwide crises of capitalism illustrative of that inherent weakness, and the potential capability of the victims of global accumulation around the world to emancipate themselves through various kinds of struggles. Thus, like the *Arusha Declaration*, Professor Amin's lectures spelt out possibilities for the emancipation of the ordinary people of the world who, despite being thoroughly integrated in global capitalism, have ironically remained victims rather than beneficiaries of that integration. He invites readers to join hands in constituting "a critical mass of intellectuals" who might bring up an "authentic renaissance of thinking that is audacious, independent and up to the challenge".

The third collection of this volume that constitute this publication is entitled *From Colonial Borders to African Unity* presented by the third Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer, Professor Bereket H. Selassie. Professor Selassie attempts to synthesise two opposing perspectives on Pan-Africanism. On one hand he deploys analytic tools to demonstrate the great strides and successes made by the Pan-African movement from its inception in the African Diaspora, through the decades of the OAU leadership, and ultimately to the initiatives being undertaken currently by the African Union. On the other hand, the author candidly examines the often rugged terrain through which the spirit of African unity has travelled over the decades and identifies unfortunate setbacks as well as lost opportunities. Therefore, while affirming that "the founding principles for African Unity have been laid down" he does not shy away from stating the bitter truth, that "Pan-Africanism is still a distant dream". The merits of this approach cannot be overemphasized since they require us to be honest in assessing our history and current circumstances, but we must also remain optimistic and focussed in the pursuit of our noble objectives. Not least among these is the need to forge a stronger and sustainable African unity.

Clearly distinguishing herself from previous lecturers in the series, Professor Micere Mugo chose a topic that may at first seem far removed from the traditional parlance in Pan-Africanist discourse. But this doubt is instantly dispelled as soon as one gains an insight into the contents and spirit of the lecture. Indeed, whether one was present at the event or has just had the opportunity to read this published version of the lecture, it easily comes to mind that Professor Mugo's contribution on this particular occasion constitutes a complete thesis: that the essence of *Pan-Africanism is liberation of the African mind and body from oppression and exploitation*; that the Pan-Africanist movement has historically proceeded and should continue to forge ahead by creating "liberated zones" within "occupied territories" on the globe and in the minds of Africans; and the art and language, understood as "indispensable aspects of culture", are both avenues for creating liberating zones and effective tools for liberating other avenues, such as the political and economic domains. Professor Mugo demonstrates practicality by briefly surveying the historical experiences of Africans in the Diaspora and in colonial Africa. She shows in each case how oppressed communities of Africans painfully but successfully created liberated zones and worked from those enclaves. Among other things, she pays homage to Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and recognizes his contributions to the advancement of Pan-Africanism in great detail. In keeping with the thrust of her thesis, she highlights Mwalimu's active participation in the promotion of African culture, and thereafter, she amplifies his role in creating liberated zones within culture. In the end, Professor Mugo conveys a clear message, which is that the war against imperialism and neo-colonial oppression must be fought from multiple avenues, including art and language as important aspects of culture.

The last piece of this publication is the lecture by the Fifth Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer, Professor Thandika Mkandawire entitled *Fifty Years of African Independence; Personal reflections*. In this lecture, Professor Mkandawire offers his reflections on the trajectory of developments in the African continent since independence, and ultimately hints on the future of the continent and her people. His account is both exciting and intellectually challenging, with its eminence deriving not so much from detailing the developmental landscapes of Africa during the first fifty years, as from probing important themes and providing nuanced and often cautious explanations of what transpired. With occasional references to his personal experience, Professor Mkandawire candidly discusses the realistic and utopian aspirations of the first generation of African nationalist leaders, the clear and shaded meanings of the decolonisation experience, the gains and lost opportunities of the first decade of independence, the unfortunate and long-lasting reversals of the 1980s and 1990s, and the promising development potentials of the current conjuncture. As he navigates the complex turns and twists of the African economic and political reality of the independence era, Professor Mkandawire clearly shows not only the agency of the global imperialist forces but also the predicament of African political leadership when caught in the traps often set by the agents of imperialism. Towards the end, the author focuses on the future and offers his personal optimism by emphasizing that Africa should do better if she adopts two principles: democratic politics and collective self-reliance. It is precisely at this point that the lecture effectively links with the pan-African agenda of the Julius Nyerere Chair, which was celebrating its fifth anniversary on the occasion. While admitting that not much has been achieved in fulfilling the agenda, Professor Mkandawire believes that the dream of a united Africa can be realised by transforming PanAfricanism

back into its original status of a political movement, and by adopting democratic politics and collective self-reliance as its core principles.

You now have a good idea of what this volume is all about and what it can do for you. In sum, this book makes a remarkable contribution to the understanding of Pan-Africanism and the need of Pan-African arbitration in finding solutions to Pan-African problems. Academics, scholars and African students may all find this book stimulating. It also provides useful guidance for practitioners involved or interested in Pan-Africanism. As we bid, *Adieu!* to Professor Shivji who has completed his tenure as the First Mwalimu Nyerere Chair in Pan-African Studies, let us stop and reflect on his efforts in the growth of a Pan-African Spirit within the University of Dar es Salaam when we read this volume. *Happy Reading!*

Professor Rwekaza S. Mukandala
Vice Chancellor
University of Dar Es Salaam

Introduction

Resurrecting Radical Pan-Africanism

Issa Shivji¹

Over five years ago, when the University of Dar es Salaam established a unique professorial chair in honour of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, we had very little conception of what its vision would be and how such a vision would be concretised. I had the honour of being appointed as the first occupant of the chair (which soon acquired the name of *kigoda*) but also the formidable task of crafting the vision and translating it into practical activities. The task was fascinating, albeit challenging. We knew what the chair ought NOT to be. First, the chair must critically uphold the ideals of Mwalimu. It could not be simply another vehicle for mobilising funds for the University regardless of the source. Mwalimu expounded the principle of self-reliance and detested diktats of foreign aid givers. We could not do otherwise. We agreed that the university, from its own funds, would shoulder administrative expenses and the salaries of the holder and his administrative assistant. Other necessary funds would be raised from internal sources, preferably from public institutions. And under no circumstances would contributions tied to conditions be tolerated.

To allow us to adhere to these principles, we would have to be modest in our budget and rely heavily on the commitment of voluntary services of our students and a few dedicated staff. I am happy to say that by the end of my term, we succeeded beyond our expectations in upholding these principles.

1 First (rtd.) Mwalimu Nyerere University Professor of Pan-African Studies.

Secondly, the chair would be strictly a serious intellectual enterprise and not political poppycock pandering to the wishes of political pundits. This was not easy. At times, it required taking a firm stand even against the wishes of the University administration. At other times, we had to turn down offers of handsome sums of money because they came with strings attached such as to invite this or that named lecturer. In yet other instances, we had to politely decline prospective sponsorships from “supporters” of the Kigoda, because THEIR objectives showed marked contradictions with ours.

Thirdly, we took seriously Mwalimu’s ideas and ideals and subjected them to critical examination. Mwalimu’s political philosophy rested on three grand pillars - liberation, African unity (pan-Africanism) and equality of all human beings based on equity (socialism). By liberation Mwalimu meant the liberation of the remaining African countries from the colonial yoke, in the first place, and liberation of all oppressed peoples wherever they may be, in the second place. For the former, Mwalimu did not flinch in committing the resources of the country, and for the latter Mwalimu wholeheartedly showed the solidarity of his people.

African unity was a passion with Mwalimu. He returned to the theme again and again and agonised over the division and balkanisation of the continent - the curse visited upon the peoples of Africa by colonialism and imperialism. He locked horns with the paragon of Pan-Africanism, Kwame Nkrumah, in the debate over All-African continental unity versus regional integration. In an extemporaneous speech made on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of Ghana’s independence (1997), Nyerere candidly admitted that his generation had failed to achieve the goal of African unity, urging the young to dedicate themselves anew to the objective of Pan-Africanism, if the continent were to withstand the onslaught of the imperialist vultures. He frankly admitted that he was wrong in the famous debate on continental unity

versus regional integration while Nkrumah was right in advocating political unity of the continent as a precondition for total emancipation of the African people.

In our publications, lectures, panels and conversations, we revisited the famous historical documents like the *Arusha Declaration* and the two party *miongozo* of 1971 and 1981. This was not an easy task. The neo-liberal generation has been so much subjected to the demonisation of nationalist and socialist ideas that we had first to disabuse them of the shallow and thoughtless neo-liberal buzzwords such as good governance, individual rights, economic competition, empowerment, free market, globalisation, mindset etc. We realised that the '80s and '90s generation had heard of the Arusha Declaration second and third hand but had never read it in its original. We undertook to reprint it. There was such a great demand that hundreds of copies were gone within the first few hours of its public appearance.

Fourthly, we attempted to reintroduce the university community to its radical tradition of the '60s and '70s. The grand narratives of the five centuries of capitalist exploitation and imperialist plunder of the African continent were revisited; the relevance of the theoretical frameworks of radical political economy were interrogated; the anti-intellectual and anti-theoretical stance of NGO activists and globetrotting development practitioners scrutinised; and the political visions of great leaders and theoreticians of liberation - Cabral and Castro, Lumumba and Lenin, Chris Hani and John Garang, Nkrumah and Neto; and of course Marx and Machel - critically celebrated. One of the great outcomes of this exciting process was the introduction and establishment of a university-wide, interdisciplinary course on Pan-Africanism. Whether it will survive in the form it was conceived, or remodelled to suit the needs and whims of donor-funded academic entrepreneurs remains to be seen.

The major highlight of the annual Julius Nyerere Intellectual Festivals was the Nyerere Annual Lecture delivered on the first day by a carefully chosen Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer. We wanted these lectures to be expansive in scope, intense in analysis, provoking in thought and inspirational through and through. Readers will judge if we managed to realise the original conception as they read this volume.

But I can say that the lectures are a great pleasure to read. They travel over epochs and continents, explore human struggles against oppression and subjugation, examine critically the doings of African rulers and give pointers to the next stage of our development. Above all, the lecturers are grand in their vision and refuse to be bogged down by academic minutiae and petty scholastic squabbles. We hope these lectures will serve as a reference point for our young generation of scholars as to what an intellectual endeavour ought to be.

A university is a terrain of the clash of ideas to generate new ideas. It is not a profit-making machine to package products in fancy certificates to make them marketable. But ideas must have their roots in society in which the university is situated. And the fruits of the growth and nurturing of ideas at the university must find their way back to society. As Mao Tse--Tung once said: we must give back to the people systematically what we get from them confusedly. These were, so to speak, the first principles which informed the work of the Chair during my term, against formidable odds, I must add. There are those who would want a university to be an exotic ivory tower; but they are few and diminishing. Worse are the many who would want to turn the university into a "factory" to produce exotic commodities, tailor-made for big corporates. Initiatives like those of the Mwalimu Nyerere Chair are, therefore, difficult to sustain, and may not be sustained. Nonetheless, they must be taken - to sustain hope and give a glimpse into what can be done, even if it is not being done.

1

Wole Soyinka

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Distinguished Lecturer, 2009

New Imperialisms

Professor Wole Soyinka

Citation Read by Professor Issa Shivji

“The man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny.”

That is a line from Wole Soyinka's prison notes called *The Man Died*. We know Wole Soyinka as a playwright; we have read him as a novelist. We have seen him perform as a poet. We recognise him as a great writer and we feel proud of him as the first African recipient of Nobel Prize for Literature.

Wole Soyinka has received many awards. I shall not narrate or count them. You will find them listed in his printed in the programme.

He has written many books – books of essays and critique and plays and poems. I shall not name them. You will find some of them mentioned in his bio data in the programme.

I will say only one thing: Wole Soyinka has been, is and continues to be a fighter against tyranny.

He has refused the man in him to die, by keeping silent in the face of tyranny.

Professor Wole Soyinka has done us a great honour by accepting to deliver the inaugural Nyerere Annual Lectures. When I first wrote to him, he was not able to accept our invitation because his 2009 calendar was, in his own words, “overcharged.” Some ten days later an email popped up in my inbox:

Dear Professor Shivji,

It's me again, since your invitation keeps popping up in my mind as one I would really wish to accept. So, if it's still on, I shall simply have to make time for it. It's an honour I do not wish to pass over.

Regards.

Wole Soyinka

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished academics: I have the great pleasure to present to you Professor Wole Soyinka, the Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer for 2009.

Professor Issa G. Shivji

Dar es Salaam

13Th April, 2009

New Imperialisms I

Whose Empire Is It Anyway?

My observation – which I fully expect will be strongly contested, is that there has ever been one major direction in the motion of human history – empire building. Human history, in short, appears to be – if I may apply a somewhat old-fashioned usage - a narrative of the rise and fall of empires. It leads to a quite plausible conclusion that one constant consciousness has driven, and still drives social man even in the fundamental mission of ensuring his own survival, and the survival of his kind – expansion and domination. A close examination of some societies in their pre-colonial phase, such as the Igbo, or some newly encountered but ancient societies in, for instance, Papua New Guinea or the Amazon, makes a strong case for some exceptions.

Unlike societies right next to the Igbo for instance – more famously the Benin, or further West, the Yoruba or, all the way southwards of the continent, the Kwazulu of the legendary Shaka - the Igbo, with their strong social formation rooted in republicanism, would appear to belie my general claim. The Igbo have no history of expansionism, being content with a strong organization around autonomous clan entities that made contact – friendly or unfriendly with one another as the need arose.

History, however, is not made of exceptions. The broad sweep of the human narrative that constitutes history argues persuasively for the view that, what has driven mankind in the progression of its society has been a motion towards unified control, even of the most disparate cultures, social systems and beliefs – an impulse that is governed by the very concept of society as one which implicates, *ab initio*, the validation of its existence only in its capacity for expansion, and enrolment of others into its own territorial identity, even if only of the loosest kind. Now, I fully expect that anyone who has read or heard me dispute the Marxist theory of history

as a product of the class struggle, its motoring force, offering in its place the axial contest between Power and Freedom, will complain that I have contradicted myself. However, examined no matter how loosely, we soon recognize that there is no contradiction whatsoever. The history of empires is merely a palpable manifestation of that most fundamental and propulsive opposition between power and freedom, between domination and resistance. Empires merely constitute the geographical expression of that impulse, one that may also be expressed as an internal, not outwardly directed exigence.

Then, of course, there is the United States. A nation of troubling ambiguities, it may be argued that it has never shown any interest in empire building, even at the peak of its powers. This urges us to examine very closely what we propose as the actuality of imperialism, or its absence. Even without extending our concept beyond the planting of flags on foreign lands, and the loosest declaration of protectorate control over distant settled places, consider the conduct of the United States after overrunning Iraq. Excepting those who had participated in the venture, 'Keep off!' was what the US yelled at the rest of the world, even to its NATO allies, and to the United Nations. Most patronizing was the grudging concession to the latter – 'we'll think of some role for the United Nations'. Declared the jubilating invaders but – later. 'Right now, we have better things to think about.' If that was not imperial thinking and declaration of intent at the end of the second millennium, then we really must think of some newly invented categorizations.

An undeniable factor was oil, that enticing quagmire that was also at the basis of Saddam Hussein's imperial misadventure – he needed to recoup, after a sapping war against Iran. However, to restrict Hussein's motives to oil alone is to dismiss his earlier pronouncements and conduct towards his neighbours, his military build-up to fuel a delusion of grandeur that made him preen himself as the reincarnation of Suleiman the Great and the Emperor Saladin combined. Hussein was a great bluffer but there was no bluffing about his military preparations, his efforts – which many have forgotten – to acquire the so-called Super-gun. There was also, quite early – not when George Bush lied that Saddam was engaged in

Weapons of Mass Destruction – Saddam's serious effort to dabble in atomic weaponry and other instruments of lethal power. Israel was the immediate target, but the dreams of a resurrected Arab/Islamic empire basically propelled his ambitions, even in his regard of that common enemy, Israel. Israel was to be a stepping-stone; her subjugation would authenticate Saddam's leadership of the Arab world. Nothing of the foregoing – let me quickly add - is intended to justify the amoral and internationally illegal – invasion of that sovereign nation by the United States and her allies. That is another matter entirely, and is being accorded its appropriate place in both contemporary journals and history books. Saddam Hussein merely serves us as a dramatic – and rather grisly – example of the imperial urge in modern times, no more. There are several others, and it does not require any special arguments to designate the United States under George Bush II as Iraq's bedfellow and rival, under Saddam Hussein, in the imperial pursuit.

If only the United States of America had borrowed a lesson from the animal world into which, with your permission – we may profitably divert ourselves for a few moments. In a negative way, that supposedly lower species exemplifies the imperial imperative – a terrible coupling, sound-wise, but accurate. Animal psychologists have come to identify a territorial demarcation habit in animals, a kind of staking out of space that those scientists have labelled the 'territorial imperative' – but with a crucial difference. It does not matter whether, as in the canine species, urine is used to demarcate the boundaries of such an acquisition, or the discharge of a unique scent is deployed to warn off interlopers – a code that is embedded in the animal gene of nearly every species - all observations point to the existence of a spatial marker in the animal's habitat, even when removed from wild Nature. To us humans, this remains an invisible fence, akin to the criss-crossing laser beams that modern technology applies to protect the Crown jewels of the British, or the bullion of Fort Knox, un-breachable by all mortals except of course James Bond 007. Without the deployment of poisoned shafts and exploding twigs however, it appears to be the case that this establishment of a protected zone, presided over by the leader of the pack, is near uniformly accepted and respected by outsiders to the zone.

The marked difference from the human is that the animal does not show any evidence of expansion and consolidation. We do not know of any case of animal conduct that suggests territorial expansion into other existing territories, either by driving off present occupants or bringing their territory under the control of an ambitious pack leader. Let us imagine that a pack of hyenas on a hunt encounters the lair of another. If that habitation happened also to be serving as a dining room over a fresh kill, both sides – especially if the visitors are hungry enough – might come to blows – or more accurately, come to bites – but there it ends. If the invading troops are strong enough, they drag off their booty to their own protected zone, where they dine off the carcass at their leisurely pace. No animal study, to my knowledge, has recorded the takeover of the territory of the loser in that encounter. There is no attempt to drive them out. And I doubt very much if the victors impose the delivery of a regular tribute in the form of daily kills – if you dispute this, just turn to Aesop's Fables and see what happened to the last carnivore to have attempted it!

To sum up: there is to be no merger instinct that leads to the victorious pack bestriding the two spaces. The victor does not proceed to irradiate a newly overrun settlement with its own unique musk to overpower the former, or lay down an outside perimeter around the former, then proceed to replicate the process elsewhere, leaving a ferocious member or two behind to guard each newly acquired space. Even in the polygamous herd, such as gorillas are deemed, we do not learn of any merger of gorilla dynasties that we are accustomed to in mergers through nuptials between ruling houses. Loot and scoot – that animal policy would have served the US better, but then, you don't loot oil fields the way you carry off gold bullions and priceless canvasses from the losers' vaults and art galleries. The alternative? The US choice – Settle in, and consolidate an undeclared empire.

To this day, alas, for better or worse, that empire building impulse dominates global interaction and the construction of bi- or multi-lateral relationships between nations. We may give it whatever name we choose: neo-colonialism, zones of influence – articulated or simply manifested in the act – ideological blocs or, most lethal of

all, theocratic empires. The commercial field is not exempt; indeed the commercial appears to have shot to the forefront as the most enduring playground – or war zone – of contemporary empire building. That last contender was most vividly manifested these past months by the effects, world-wide, of the earliest rumblings that first emanated from the commercial nerve-centre known as Wall Street. The paving stones of that famous street began to crack, and the first sounds triggered off seismic occurrences across the globe, sowing panic even in places that had given the impression of enjoying autonomous self-regulation, with strong, internal capital buffer zones of their own, insulated from the more powerful monetary systems.

Suddenly, they were compelled to learn the truism in the expression – when Wall Street sneezes, the world catches cold. To tell the truth, my knowledge of the world of finance is so limited that I am still unable to determine who actually first sneezed or where. All that appears certain is that the epicentre of that sneeze was Wall Street, and that the shakes that had overtaken world-wide banking and commercial institutions began to subside only when the White House and the US Congress under George Bush took steps to shore up the monetary system. Alas, it was to merely muffle the death rattle of that control centre, once thought impregnable.

Too late it proved, and perhaps not merely too late and too little but also misdirected. The respite was a deception. And so, for all I know, maybe it was China that sneezed after all, only the United States was too embarrassed to admit it. To do so, would have meant an admission of the loss of control of the world's financial empire. It would also partly explain why the 'bail-out' measures that were then taken by the US failed to take effect, and have resulted in a belatedly acknowledged global melt-down, whose rapidly expanding waves have also stricken – as has been acknowledged in recent times, even by China.

Now, why China? A few years ago, I would very likely have singled out Japan? Again, first underlining the fact that I have always been, and am doomed to remain an economic illiterate the rest of my life, I nevertheless dare to claim that I actually know a little of the shift in trading advantages in entrepreneurial relations

that have been taking place on my continent over the past decade or more. The Chinese, having slowly but surely built up their capital reserves, ironically largely through the export of cheaply produced commodities to western and Third World consumer markets, felt prepared to commence their massive inroads into the ever obliging African continent. This took place in a steady, structured manner - no fuss, no fanfare, on the surface uncoordinated but – anything but!

I like to see this as an improvement on the strategy of the ‘pre-modern’ empire-builders like Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal, whose advance guard, the explorers, moved into uncharted, that is, uncharted by Europe – territories of the continent, cajoling or forcing local chiefs into placing their thumbprints on treaties they mostly did not understand, often preceded by the evangelist storm troopers who persuaded the ‘heathens’ that their souls were in mortal danger unless they also signed up in the Holy Book, but only after signing up the Imperial Treaty.

The differences are of course multiple. Among them, the Chinese were dealing with modern, sophisticated leaders – never mind how, in many cases, crooked and self-serving. Their trade treaties were vetted by lawyers, and they brought with them not the slightest complication of ideological or religious evangelism. It was all strictly business. The Chinese also proved adept at identifying and wooing the non-governmental leaders of thought, especially in the cultural and intellectual fields, first ensuring however that these were politically safe. Before the Western governments and companies knew what was happening, the ‘yellow menace’ was once again staining the commercial map of the continent a vivid orange. I exaggerate slightly, but I am in fact providing an accurate expression of the present degree of alarm from the centres of the old imperial order, now brought under siege.

In my external encounters, that alarm translated into some quite bemusing exchanges whenever I found myself the victim of yet another press interview or post-lecture inquisition. Sooner or later the question would surface, often with mind-boggling disconnection from whatever happened to be the theme of my lecture: don’t you see a danger arising from the Chinese incursion into Africa? That such a

question should arise in the first place is a clear pointer to the western perception of what I have earlier referred to as a presumption of permanently established, eternal 'zones of influence'. They operate in the minds of the West as protected fields of interest and operations, based on a strict bilateralism – the West and Africa – into which even tentative probes of a third party amounted to hostile aggression. In short, the modern, undeclared neo-empires that have replaced colonial possessions, those having been forced out of fashion by the radical ideological winds that blew in from the Urals.

The irony appeared lost on my questioners. There you have the very apostles of free trade and open markets now attempting to warn Africans and their governments of the dangers of letting in a new commercial adventurer into what are supposedly independent territories, never mind that the new competitor offers trading conditions and development opportunities that are clearly advantageous, in comparison to what those nations had ever known at the hands of the former commercial imperators.

From tentative probes, brushing aside even political considerations such as the menace of local dictatorships, corrupt leadership, or issues of African and global concerns such as Darfur, the Chinese began to consolidate their hold on the continent, and of course their answer to Western anxieties is contained in the title of this address, since the question they pose, a slyly polite smile on their face, to the first-comer, complacent early arrivals – French, British, Italian, American, Russian - and their latter waves of multi-faceted entrepreneurs is just that: whose empire do you think it is anyway? Yours? Since when? And by what divine apportionment? That the Chinese appeared to be undeterred by the often nauseous vestments of their sleeping partners in power is of course a serious issue, one that is of concern to, and has been taken up by a number of civic movements, both publicly and privately.

The hypocrisy of the challenged monopolists is however even more nauseous. When the campaign against the Chinese Olympics hotted up, especially when the Chinese tacit support for the criminal government of Omar Bashir, was moved to the fore as the rallying banner, I was obliged to make it clear to a number of pressure

groups that, while I was itching for concrete international action – including military intervention - to end the conduct of the Sudanese government against its African indigenes, I most certainly could not support a call for a boycott of the Olympics.

Many civil rights movements and their leaders were indeed moved by the plight of the Fur, the Zaghawa and other repressed Western Sudanese, and were spurred to action by the abundant weight of evidence of crimes against humanity by the Sudanese government. They were however, unaware that the displacement of Tibet by Darfur as the battle-cry against the Chinese was not completely innocent. A sizable proportion of that fervor was instigated by state commercial interests of the West which simply wished to erode Chinese legitimate incursion into the Western imperial outreach, located in Africa. Chinese imperialism is of course a genuine issue, and I use that expression objectively, as a believer in the avoidance of double standards in attitudes towards any human community. Any people occupied or ruled against their will are victims of imperial malice or greed, and their overlords can do with lessons I have already indicated from the animal world. If external domination is rejected by the African peoples, it cannot be condoned in any other peopled space, from Palestine through Yugoslavia to Tibet.

The reality of the neo-empire of commerce, and its conferment of political, and indeed, insidious cultural authority, sometimes entailing corruption and pollution of values, accompanied in some cases by powers of interventionism in various degrees of overtness and subtlety, was something that had clearly obsessed Osama bin Laden, albeit with the destructive pathology of the fanatic mind. Hence he made, as one of his primary targets, the twin towers of the World Trade Building in the United States in his challenge to what he perceived as the main rival to his vision of the Eternal Empire – the empire of Allah. The taunt that was flung at the world, but most directly at the imperial helm located in the ‘Land of the Great Satan’, the United States, was not too far from the quieter, methodical expansionism of the Chinese. It reads: ‘Just whose empire do you think this is anyway?’

Osama bin Laden's empire to end all empires, one that he seeks to substitute for what he has designated empires of decadence, lewdness, impiety and consumerist self-indulgence, ironically shares attributes with its avowed enemy – the Empire of Mammon – an empire that is not defined by any palpable, demarcated boundaries, nor does it need them. It presupposes, for a start, the elimination of boundaries as presently recognized, or at the very least, their irrelevance, taking us back to that thesis that we outlined at the beginning – that the motion of political man is towards the ideal of a unified social existence, even if it is one that exists only in the universe of projections. The very language of Christian crusaders and Moslem jihadists alike employs the syntax of empire builders.

If you asked bin Laden what he had gained from the blood-saturated hole that he gouged from the streets of New York, he would undoubtedly respond, exactly as did Badayev, that latter-day King Herod of the siege of Beslan. You may recall that, asked that very question after a vicious battle that netted his occupation of a tiny village in Cherchenya, Badayev's reply was, more or less – a new tract of land wrested from a godless empire, from which shall rise the Empire of Allah.

At least, Badayev was standing on a palpable piece of real estate, no matter how brief his occupation proved. Bin Laden's empire is founded less on landed property – though he has no objection to such acquisitions – than on an empire without borders. It is sufficient for him that he holds a virtual sword of Allah suspended over the empire of his vision – the unified empire of God from one end of the globe to the other. These are the strange bed-fellows we encounter in the neo-imperial mission that challenges the traditional, constantly negotiable world-ordering. The theocratic empire as surveyed by the fanatic mind does not admit of territorial dispute, subject to arbitration, or demarcated by dissent. It is boundless and eternal.

We all here, confessedly, are subjects of that empire of Mammon, over whose dominion the – well, indulgent and permissive – scepter of globalized consumerism – with all its impieties, cultural decadence, godlessness etc, holds sway also from one end of the world to another, an empire so powerful that ancient, organic means of production are

subverted or transformed overnight, their social ethos crushed and cultures marginalized. The bill of charges often reads like a repeat of that phase of European expansionism that was directly related to the continent's experience during Europe's Industrial Revolution. The expression today is of course none other than '*globalization*'.

This new empire-building is founded on the strategy of infinitely expandable boundaries, only deceptively undemarcated with any rigidity. The design and operational methods of each such neo-empire renders it virtually impregnable - except of course when it caves in on itself - as in recent times - ensuring the collateral ruin of its dependent, economic satellites. Even after the battered empire has recovered, it will only be to find an enemy, or rival, even closer than ever to its battlements. Its very confidence and complacency render it vulnerable, and its takeover by new imperial forces appears to be only a matter of time. It would seem that, for now, no contender in the field appears to be as well provisioned and focused as China. That giant republic, having abandoned the ideological empire that it once contested with the Soviet Union, now marshals its prodigious, systematically accumulated capital forces, deploying the same weapons of domination to inform the western powers that they have merely been holding an empire in trust, but now, the next-in-line of imperators has come to claim its own.

Let us take a quick look at the sometime beguiling thoroughness of the modern empire building, even within domestic and seemingly incompatible matrices. Note how some of the most prestigious universities in the empire's control centre - the United States - succumb to the basic expansionist and/or consolidating imperative. Most people see empire building as strictly one of an outward direction but, no. This point requires emphasis - empire building or consolidation is not necessarily an outward movement, and we shall come to some very troubling, indeed life-and-death instances in a moment. For now, we shall indulge in a lighter note. Take a university in the States where I once taught - Emory University, Atlanta, and there you find yourself within the heart of the Coca-cola Empire. Now cross the American landmass to a university such as Stanford in California, and the map of learning reveals itself as a quiltwork of

rivalling commercial imperial holdings. Are they content to let be the status quo be, enter into a pact of non-aggression between the coloured patches that demarcate the scattered territories of imperial Coke or its rival, the Preppy Pepsi? No, from time to time you find that the blotches on the map have changed. Some have disappeared altogether, others fused, as one university signs a new pact of allegiance with the imperial product, swearing on its college escutcheon that it will forever forswear the slightest taste of the rival product.

The Sporting field now reminds one of the sixteenth and seventeenth century fields of gold where French and British ruling houses vied with each other in the rites of splendour –today, it is Michael Jordan versus Helflinger, tomorrow Nike and Adidas that vie for the soul – spelt both ways – of college sports, and God help any member of a team who wears – no, not so much the colours of the rival team, but of the enemy empire! It is winner-take- all, and the victor moves on towards its ideal – college takeovers and consolidation side by side with, or in the wake of global conquest. I do not frankly recall which came first, or care.

I still vividly recall however when, in November or December 1986, Coca-cola signed its pact with the Soviet Union with all the formal fanfare, not merely of an ideological breakthrough, but of an accord between two forces, to all appearances, equal and opposite. The Soviet Union was still under Communist rule, and such was the gravity of the occasion that one felt that it was a treaty between two distinct empires, and perhaps, to a large extent, it was. Needless to say, the rival products – Pepsi, Sprite and others were not slow to seek out their own foreign territories. One headed for China, the Soviet Union's challenger for communism's imperial crown. Another territory, Saudi Arabia fell to some other product, soon trumped by the acquisition of Qatar or somewhere else by the leftovers.

The so-called doctrine of Free Trade proved to be a euphemism for a ruthless contest over turf, few prisoners taken. Diversification of products was really a cover for acquisitions that led to the establishment of the mega-company and multi-nationals, ensuring that control was kept strictly within what we may consider as the extended imperial family. Every commercial move on a global scale can be paralleled by

what we know of the history of political empires – instead of Ottoman, Russian, Roman or British Empires, simply read Lehman, Enron, Hearst or Murdoch – but now, increasingly neo-Sino.

Even the book world has not been permitted a modest, inviolate space. Just when I thought I was settling down into my new Italian publishing family, Frasinelli, it got swallowed by some three-headed monster whose names I refuse to remember. I happen to like small publishing houses, I did not hesitate in escaping even Oxford University Press, my first publishers, when my then editors, Rex Collings and Geoffrey Strachan, moved into Methuen. Again I moved out with Rex Collings when he set up his own publishing house, Rex Collings Ltd. His office in Paddington Street, London, I remember, ended up in an underground warren, where his partner, Ian Coltart, grew mushrooms. I don't think the mushrooms had anything to do with Rex Collings going bankrupt but, bankrupt he went, owing me some three years in royalties – maybe there is something to be said for the larger publishing empires, after all.

No matter, I moved back in with Methuen. Next thing I knew, that modest publishing house vanished overnight – though not without a struggle that resulted in a reduced specialist unit as Methuen. In the main however, it was sucked into the maw of a new publishing entity appropriately named Octopus books. The unkindest cut of all however is that the new mergers no longer produce and sell only books – and I am not speaking here of my British eccentric who grew mushrooms in the office cellars. In any case, he did not sell the damned things, he only grew them. We are speaking here of large corporate entities, called publishing houses, that now market designer and consumer goods, even as oil companies have diversified into the world of sporting goods and banana plantations.

These are the imperial forces of our time, gobbling up geographical territories as fast as they swallow commercial products, unified, ironically, by the very diversity of their commercial interests, so that the imperial map of the world today. I am never quite sure which would be the best representation – can be read either as a series of interlocking circles, or a stack of transparencies, one laid on top of the other, with goods superimposed on real estate, oil blocks

between pineapple plantations, chain stores, and merging ownership dynasties slipped between all of them or superimposed.

The once famous media empires – and they were indeed known by that name – are not exempted. One wakes up one day to find that the staid – or if you prefer – the ‘serious’ newspapers, such as that bulwark of the best of British tradition, The Times of London, has been taken over by the tabloid empire, luridly lorded over by the Daily Mirror or News of the World, with predictable results. Scratch a media house today and you’ll find that it bleeds oil, bitumen or sun-tan lotions, and has whopping shares in the tourist industry with a hotel chain, casino and mud spas – now we know where all that tabloid mud is stored!

Should anyone have been surprised when, about two decades ago, one of the youngest and most adventurous airlines, Virgin Atlantic took on the stodgy, ancient empire oriented company known as British Airways, and then preceded to push the boundaries of imperialism beyond the British frontiers? From Virgin Atlantic to Virgin America, Virgin Columbia to – believe it or not – Virgin Nigeria! Nor does it end with the actual geographical territory – the commodity lure is irresistible, and Virgin Air soon draws into its orbit Virgin oil, Virgin wines, Virgin pesto and Virgin cigars – Virginity is today’s the hottest ensign, and the whole world is re-stitching its hymen to qualify as Virgin territory, open for imperial penetration. The theme of global connection is no longer the supply of communication means but world unification through commodity brand-names.

Again, let us stress that there is nothing new about all this, all we need remark is the pace, and the results, which sometimes spill over into the world of culture. Is there, for instance, cultural imperialism? Certainly there was, when the cultures of the colonizing powers were rammed down the throats of the politically emasculated societies. Today, I believe we need to exercise caution in laying that charge. Collaborative cultural enslavement would probably best describe the unsavory aspects of unreflective embrace of, or submissiveness to the intruding cultures, a sense of inferiority that leads to the abandonment of, or a sense of inferiority towards, existing cultural traditions.

Today, there are far wider avenues of exposure, and eclectic array of choices in cultural alliances. At the same time however, we dare

not ignore the fact that the technological conduits of culture, which favour certain societies more than others, carry with them an in-built baggage of cultural content, which facilitates the displacement of the technologically weaker.

Thus, there are times, I must confess, when one is driven to excess by the need to counter the seemingly unstoppable march of – yes indeed – cultural imperialism. Music is easily the most aggressive. I recall how, some three decades ago, driven to distraction by the aural pollution of my Nigeria university campus which was built and named for an environment that was not only steeped in Yoruba culture, but one whose mission was to protect and promote that culture, I embarked on an instant and drastic cultural sanitation of the environment under my control. I was then placed in charge of an arts complex, quite a modest one, known as Oduduwa Hall.

Driving into those premises one day, I found myself violently assaulted by one of these banal, thoompity-thumpity rhythms played at high decibel from the ghetto-buster. To rub pepper in the aural wound, it had been strategically placed so that any visitor to that complex was bombarded by the sounds a long way before encountering my jealously guarded domain. In my defence, it was early morning, and I had just emerged from my residence, which had been carefully selected to admit nothing but the descant of birds in the mornings and the vespers of cicadas in the evenings. I think I went berserk, for what I did was not simply stopping the ghetto buster but busted the buster. I yanked out the record, broke it in two and flung the pieces to the winds. From then on, nothing was permitted – and at a considerably reduced decibel - except music from the African continent, later to be joined by the authentic music of any land - except the pop list of Europe and America.

Such bouts of parochial derangement occasionally assail even the most accommodative and balanced of us, I suspect, at least once in a lifetime. Culture is not, however, limited to merely the arts, being far more comprehensive of life styles, social ethos, productivity and leisure modes. You can thus imagine that I thus felt more than a mere twinge of sympathy or, indeed empathy with that French acclaimed cultural Samson who, about a decade ago, took a bulldozer to the

foundations of a new Disneyland that was being erected just outside Paris at the time.

That statement of Disney imperialism was the limit. The man had seethed, but with resignation, at the appearance of The Golden M, the flag of MacDonalds etc. in the heart of Paris, where he had been accustomed to having his early morning espresso with perhaps a raw egg or two in a glass of Marc, or lunching at the neighbourhood bistro, assured of nothing more sinister than frogs legs, chunks from his baguette dripping from bouillabaisse and duckling a l'orange. But now, enter an army of hippies with torn jeans and backpacks, gum chewing infidels from across the Atlantic. He had mouthed silent imprecations, feeling helpless before the economic might of the invaders.

When the enemy charge was reinforced by Disney forces however, he snapped, mounted a bulldozer and set to work on the foundations. He was taken to court, naturally, and found guilty. Maybe the French equivalent of the plea of '*diminished responsibility*' was applied, because he walked out of that court a free man – I believe there was a token fine – but, to the majority of the French, to all appearances, he was an instant hero, the modern Joan of Arc of cultural integrity.

No judgment is being passed on the desirability or not, of a unified social organism, even on a global level, towards which, it sometimes appears, the world is constantly tilted, if not exactly propelled. Whether such a tendency indeed represents an advance in the management and provisioning of social man, of his spiritual dimensions, or constitutes a retrogression, is certainly open to serious, multi-textured debate, extending from practical strategies to questions over humanity's very existential mission. It is sufficient to recognize for now that the earlier named 'imperial imperative' goes beyond mere instinct and constitutes historic motions. Do note however that this has not been without contestation, often a life-and-death struggle for and against. It is near impossible to deny its assertiveness, or its accompanying resistance, ever since the first appearance of tool-making and organising primates on our globe. I state this in order to stress that the most negatively impacting wars that humanity has ever known have been wars of expansion and consolidation. Some choose to address this pejoratively as the consequences of human

power dementia, a mutation of the ego, individual or collective that finds fulfilment only in dreams of world domination.

There is sufficient cause for that negative outlook – the most memorable figures in the history of the imperial dream appear to have been irredeemably evil – you only have to look at Adolf Hitler, or his rival on the ideological divide – Josef Stalin. Their dreams proved the world's enduring nightmare, made other empire builders before and after look like schoolboys, not exempting figures like Alexander who was reputed to have burst into tears after a famous victory. Why are you crying? He was asked. The spoiled brat of the god of war whined that it was because he had no more worlds to conquer. A likely story, indeed, but it illustrates a prominent psyche, of which Stalin and Hitler remain the preeminent case studies. Now, is there a positive, even possibly virtuous explanation for that imperious instinct?

I believe a case can be made. I have become convinced, over the years, that that pessimistic view of the imperial mission short-changes the elevated sensibilities of mankind, and his historic subconscious. Side by side with the amount of literature there is – especially in science-fiction – over the attempts of one man, usually portrayed as evil or insane – to dominate the world, there exists another view, one that suggests that humanity has sadly developed a self derogatory interpretation of its own history. An alternative analysis therefore, a plausible and positive explanation for the trajectory of domination, is surely one of the dream of human re-unification, a quest for a dimly remembered unity of being, a striving towards Paradisial union of existence that preceded the Fall from Grace, the fragmentation of the world, and its incessant bouts of fratricidal conflicts. In short, buried somewhere in the deep recesses of the human mind – or soul, if you prefer – is an idyll of oneness, retention perhaps from man's unicellular beginnings.

That last-mentioned is the biological variant, and a benign one, that non-religionists will find more palatable than the metaphysical proposition, theocratic in nature which – to make matters worse – appears to manifest itself in brutal ways. The malignant side of the hidden craving for unification, or more theologically – re-

unification – continues to provide us fodder for a mixture of science-fiction and suspense drama – the mad scientist working away at his tubes, cisterns and rockets , delivering ultimatums to petty independencies called nations, federations, republics but mostly targeting the so-called world powers. Intimidate the mega-powers, get them to knuckle under, and the rest will fall in line, fast and cowed. So the message goes out – do my bidding, line up behind or within, or else get pulverized. And to demonstrate that he means business, he unleashes a tiny sample of what his powers can do – anatomises a small island while heads of state are gathered before giant monitoring screens to witness the warning event, which comes about at the appointed second.

After that, they have only two choices – accede to the demands of the new world emperor, or send our trouble-shooter Double-O-Seven to sort him out. Forget the demands that the new imperator makes for the bullion stashed away in the vaults of the Bank of England – that seeming extortionist racket is merely a time-honoured ploy to demonstrate just who is master. We are all familiar with the tradition of tributes imposed by conquering nations or micro-empires, and anyway the conqueror always requires more and more revenue from his subjects in order to maintain forces for their continuing subjugation.

We should therefore cease to accept the portrayal of these new would-be imperators as extortionists, but see them as keepers of the time-honoured tradition of tribute. These seeming villains are nothing more than Ultra-tidy, Ultra-schematic Minds that cannot tolerate a world scurrying about in multiple directions, scattered all over the place, pursuing conflicting interests that are resolved in bouts of mutual decimation. They need to bring it all under unified control, confer on humanity a unity of purpose. We must seek to understand them as visionaries of a lost Paradise, to the recovery of which their lives and genius are obsessively dedicated.

Whether given expression in the Hindu concept of Mahapralayi – the return of Being and Existence to the Womb of Origin and nothingness, or the Islamic myth of The Last Imam whose coming

shall signal the closing of the gates upon a sinful world, after the admission of the faithful into a unified empire of Goodness and Piety, or its christian expression of the Last Day of Judgment when the trumpets shall sound - sometimes known as the Apocalypse - and numerous other variants of myth and faith, the world of religion has always projected a unified metaphysical dominion for us as the Ideal, the end of striving and the purpose of existence.

As already indicated, it is either one in which there is no distinction – as in Mahapralayi or, a division of the world into the provinces of Good and Evil. What remains constant is that motion towards the final contest in which all or a part shall be totally vaporised, or, at its more generous, the evil element cast down into the abyss of perdition, there to gnash their teeth and wail their existence for eternity. The surviving world thus attains primal unity. No division. No dissension. Only the Original consciousness of Being. In Milton's epic, *Paradise Lost*, the heroic qualities attributed to Satan, even in his overthrow should be sufficient to alert us to the notion that the battle is only a prelude, mostly symbolic, and that the end is what matters – the fulfilment of a primordial oneness of man, over and beyond a mere contest between good and evil.

In my schooldays, that legendary pair - Charlemagne, protagonist of Christendom, and his no less titanic rival Suleiman the Great, loomed large as forceful encapsulations of the primordial instinct of socio-political man towards global reunification – global being whatever territorial coverage of the world constituted their entire geographical knowledge at the time. I find them echoing that archetypal contest of *Paradise Lost*, offering two pairs of protagonists near evenly matched, brought to life at the hands of epic poets, artistes and historians. Examine all the texts of historians on the exploits, military clashes, qualities, humanistic virtues such as generosity, even acts of chivalry – not omitting of course – cruelties of these two generals, and you find that their chroniclers take great pains, even fall over backwards, to place them at the head of a noble enterprise.

Once we have overcome Milton's distraction of Good and Evil, we are left with only one driving force – the attempt to unify the globe and

restore it to its pristine condition, a paradisial wholeness. Of course, at the base of this contest lay the question, whose Imperial Oneness shall it be – that of the Islamic or the Christian order? That question surfaces again and again, especially today. It is asked both openly and implicitly, through peaceful evangelism and through mind-boggling violence. When, as occurred in a poll recently conducted in Great Britain among some Islamic youths, this question was put to them: ‘Would you kill in the name of religion?’ The answer came up: ‘Yes for the majority’. Maybe, we should try and understand that these are not necessarily psychopaths. A sizeable number view themselves as warriors committed to the Grand Design – the reunification of the world, the establishment of the Holy Islamic Empire.

The Roman Empire. Then the Holy Roman Empire. The Islamic Empire. The Communist Empire or the Evil Empire as Ronald Reagan would have us see it – that last reinforcing so dramatically our earlier observation of history as a narrative of the rise and fall of empires, but not before bequeathing to the world something of a dubious value – a vacuum – fought over by the ideologues of religions. Uniting them all, ironically – or shall we simply say, shared by all – is the utopian conclusion of the great dialectics of socio-political progression, as preached by a godless ideology, Communism. Let us, along the way, and in all objectivity, at least acknowledge that the passage of that fallen empire did leave a radically transformative imprint wherever it touched during over a century of expansionist existence. So much for the positive legacy of one doctrinaire empire, whose ramifications, even more than those of Christianity and Islam, have led to revisions of concepts of the human condition, history, and progressive options of social ordering.

The vacuum created by its demise continues to generate, consciously or unconsciously, a contest for imperial control, an often confusing admixture of the theocratic and the materialist, not surprisingly, since both the profane and the divine meet at, and are realized at that other destination, the negative face of the theoretical idyll - Power over men, and over territory. It is that factor, and its

dialectical antithesis, Freedom, that constitute what I prefer to recognize as the true motor force of history.

Contest between imperial claims and their forces, is of course, nothing new. It pre-existed the materialist Challenger, Communism, and persisted even while that empire was well and thriving, before internal contradictions, aided by cracks within its hegemony, and apparent doctrinal fallacies led to its collapse. A harsh, contemporary reminder is that lethal field of contestation, Afghanistan, where championship for the Eastern outpost of the weakened communist empire has been assumed by a hodgepodge but focused force, the Taliban, dedicated to recovering the acreage of the Holy Islamic Empire that had been appropriated by the godless ideology. One would hesitate to claim that the forces now wrestling with the Taliban for that last Eastern outpost of the fallen Communist empire constitute an empire in themselves.

The armies of the Western world do however serve the evolving imperialist formulation that is determined to outlast them all, that other contestant upon which we touched earlier, schooled in aligning itself to whoever is the supervening empire of the moment, with its trans-border forces of Free Market, and a consumerist culture, promoted and served by the new commercial megaliths and multinational corporations, an empire that has learnt to quietly absorb its setbacks, then regroup and advance, the faceless empire that is more generally known as '*Globalisation*'.

Yes, globalization. Whenever the word comes up, I always ask for clarification. Well, not so much clarification, as a question – why is the phenomenon always treated as new? Globalisation has been with the world since the eruption of trans-border religious evangelism, creating what I have described elsewhere as the quasi-states, or the borderless empire. And that is why, with those evangelical originators of the globalist mission in mind, in posing the question, 'Whose Empire is it anyway?' I like to follow up with another question from one paradoxically understated, ignored, even despised contestant, because passive, self-effacing, erring on the side of self-sufficiency,

though unpresumptuous. We recognize and can define the god-denying empire of communism, the god-dominated empires of Islam and Christianity, and the godless, or shall we say instead pantheistic, or simply god-indifferent, ecumenical, increasingly aggressive empire of globalization. That leaves us only one rhetorical question, a variant of the title of this address, from the polity of reticence - And, for a start, just where is the secularist empire?

Now that, so far, in all recorded history, has had no palpable response. The continent of Africa, buffeted from all sides by the contending empires we have already enumerated, is remarkably situated to make and actualize that imperial claim, more accurately described however, as anti-imperial. By secularist of course, I indicate almost interchangeably - a humanist charter. Non-doctrinaire, non-exclusionist, non-discriminatory and non-subservient. Nation spaces truly independent of any external imperial order but also - without internal imperial relationships. That conceptual vacuum has lain open and prostrate, ready for visionary occupation. It has been ignored.

Those to whom the challenge belongs have preferred to wage wars of domination within their little imperial ponds, their little pieces of dirt that they bestride under the grandiloquent term of nation, independent nations, national sovereignties, giant of Africa and other benighted, self-preening titles. Not for a moment - with the exceptions of a pitiful handful of visionaries such as the late Julius Nyerere, our Celebrant - did they consider the option of re-constituting the imperial holdings an internally coherent, humanized spaces, polities that permanently bury the very concept and bequests of empire. Name it Ubuntu, name it Ujamaa, name it Pan-Africanism - in its original conception, not later corruption, name it even 'African socialism', but not as a mere catch-phrase - this notion has been dreamt, then turned into nightmares by vicious, anti-people leadership, alienated beyond the worst excesses of external imperators. Therein, lays the true tragedy of the African continent - shoring up the imperial rubble of others - theocratic, secular, and economic - all translating into a failure to provide the world that

alternative for which the African continent, from its historic trials and their lessons, is most qualified to offer – a political model of human co-habitation that is truly without empires.

We shall speak of putative efforts to lay the foundations, or perhaps more modestly, simply erect scaffoldings for the framework of the 'non-empire', of the tenacious imperators to whom this has remained an anathema, of the small victories and greater reverses and betrayals, in our second and concluding lecture.

New Imperialisms II

Anything to do with Slavery?

Let us laud, whenever and wherever the opportunity offers itself, those occasions that appear to repudiate the imperial option. The conduct of Nigeria and Cameroon over the disputed islands of Bakassi, represents one of the cheering instances of mature self-denial. The Bakassi – for those who have never heard of it - contains oil rich resources, and it was the claim to the ownership of this island, rather than any sense of identification with the humanity that populated them, that pushed the two nations closer to armed conflict more times in the last few decades than many on either side choose to remember. In the end, both parties agreed to submit their claims to the International Court at The Hague.

As Verdict Day approached, the debate waxed fiercely on the pages of journals, threatened to incinerate the airwaves of electronic media, certainly on our Nigerian side. Dire predictions and incendiary commentaries flew through the watering-holes of the ultra-patriots. Left to this eternal breed, Nigeria should simply go to war, not even wait for the verdict to be pronounced. I have no doubt whatsoever that identical drums of patriotic frenzy resounded across the disputed border, on the Cameroonian side.

I found it most benumbing that we, who have endured so much and for so long at the hands of imperial powers on our soil as subject peoples, should actually urge one side or the other to an act that amounted to little different from the conduct of our erstwhile colonizers. For that was all it was – colonization. You colonize people when you impose a rule over them without their consent, turn them into outposts of an imperial order. And so, some of us asked the question: has anyone ever ascertained from the people of Bakassi their own choice? Within whose artificial borders, all products of an imperial will, did they prefer to be? The Cameroonian? The Nigerian? Or simply, the Bakassian? Any other course, anything

short of a genuine referendum, the ascertaining of the will of the occupants of those islands, is an act of imperialism, an irony that was lost on the jingoists who urged the then government not to accept the unfavourable decision of the International Court at the Hague. Wisely, that government, at whose doors many criminalities can be laid, avoided that specific trap.

A few years after the decision from The Hague, and after much bi-lateral negotiations and memoranda of understanding between the two nations, the Nigerian side finally embarked on the repatriation of the Bakassian humanity that chose to remain Nigerian nationals. Lo and behold, the nation's House of Representatives – supposedly products of a democratic process – that is, products of the exercise of popular will, however imperfect, even corrupted – erupted in an uproar, urged by those who felt that the nation had sold herself short, and should renege on an international commitment. The obligations of the verdict were nothing less, since both sides had submitted their claims to a legal, international court of arbitration. They were not obliged to do so in the first place. One obvious recourse, needless to point out, would have been a bi-lateral process of negotiations, resulting optimistically in a partnership for the exploitation of the resources of the disputed slab of real estate. For this to happen of course, both sides have to be conscious of a very banal reality, that the primary producer of wealth in any nation space, and thus the primary beneficiary of such wealth should be the humanity that invests the space, not the abstract entity known as state. Thus, the primary wealth of a nation is its people – first, in the fact that it is the humanity that produces, next in the fact that any meaningful measure of a nation is taken, not in the extravagance of its exhibitionist and prestige structures, but in the quality of life that is manifested in its citizens. Both Nation and Society transcend abstraction; each is concretely defined by the palpable existence of the humanity that animates and recreates the patch of dirt and foliage that many take to be the nation reality.

By contrast – let us remain within that nation just a little longer – that same nation space happens to provide us a most sinister face of the imperial urge. She is not alone of course, it only happens that that

nation did throw up, a decade and a half ago, a singularly repellent representative of the continent's array of mutant imperators, nearly all of whom, I sometimes suspect, prepared their blood-stained passages through reading the wrong books. Of course, that claim in itself may be conferring on them too much credit, since it assumes that they do read at all or, having read, or have read to them passages of inspiration, are capable of extracting the right lessons from such texts. Certainly they appear to model themselves on the obsolete, repudiated concepts of political governance, their eyes trained solely on the power apex on which they perch themselves, mentally and programmatically, and refuse to be dislodged.

The world has moved on however, since the reign of such catechisms. Indeed, not only has the world moved on, the world has never been a uniform arena of events, and the notions that derive from either one temporal phase or geographical space, or combination of both, have never been guaranteed applicable to the entire world. To assume this is to bestow universal relevance on partial derivatives, a dangerous proceeding for any would-be ruler, since it spells alienation from the specific terrain over which such rulers preside.

In 1990, the people of the Nigerian nation woke to the now ubiquitous sound of martial music over the air-waves, and that ominously familiar invocation to a newly captive people that begins: "Fellow Nigerians...." They did not need to listen further. The nation knew that another round of musical chairs had begun. There was a difference however, sensed, in all likelihood, by only a handful, a difference that would be manifested in unprecedented ways even in the nation's experience of military brutality. Nigerians were accustomed to having coups for breakfast, counter-coups for lunch and reprisal coups for dinner, but there was something different about the menu of annunciation for this specific day – at least for those who had not turned off their sound-boxes before the end, and fatigued by the drawn-out prelude to this coup.

That coup, you may recall, followed the truncation of a democratic process after several false starts, a truncation that took place at the end of an election, even as results from polling stations were being

announced and a clear winner was already discernable. Those who paid attention however must have been struck by the insertion, towards the end, of an unaccustomed phrase consisting of just six words. The usual palliative assurances had been trotted out – no sooner given, the nation knew full well, than placed on a fast track for dismantling – corruption would be severely punished, all government agencies probed, the era of mismanagement would be terminated, all international obligations would be met, civil liberties and human rights would be respected etc. but....

Yes, the ‘but’! The bonus that signed off the annunciation, following on that ‘but’, was pure menace: “Watch your butts!” the actual words being, “Let – no – one – test – our – Will” This was different. When I heard those words, I could only ask myself, what books had the coup-makers’ speech-writers been reading? “Let no one test our will!” It was the first time that we had heard such an imperial declaration, and we needed no telling that this set of coup-makers was striking out in a new direction, a direction that spelt imminent peril for the nation. We would be proven right.

Once upon a time indeed, it was still possible to consider the state as an expression of monarchical or imperial Will, the ruler the embodiment of State, the sun from which life itself radiated downwards to the people. We all know the fates of the most tenacious adherents of that doctrine, from the British monarchy of the luckless King James to Russia of the Czars, and the luck-favoured Shah Palavhi of modern-day Persia who escaped with his skin intact.

The notion of the State as the embodiment of Will, of the Spirit Ideal, a mystic silo for the unravelling of historic processes towards the pinnacle of self-fulfilment, also ran its course. That Ideal, the State, was fused in the person of the absolute ruler, among whose ranks, it must be admitted, there did indeed emerge from time to time, the few ‘enlightened’ ones, cultured, people oriented, and visionary. Such exceptions may have delayed the process of dismantling the elaborate illusion, sustained over centuries. Mostly however the State was Supreme Ego, an Inviolable Aloofness, a Divine Principle, beyond mortal challenge.

The earthly principality was itself a pale copy of the heavenly realm towards whose absolute perfection the former aspired. Holding up the vision of that Ideal was the Absolute Ruler, most predictably a monarch, but occasionally also an obsessed or inspired individual, roused by circumstances or ambition, to invest in his person millions of humanity and the sum of their destiny, a hubristic dare – not without its compelling nature – that was most memorably and grandiloquently summarized in Charles de Gaulle's historic evocation – *L'état, c'est moi!*

There are social orders that constantly resurrect and refurbish this dream of Spirit Idealism – under whatever guise, not always theological – in assumption of the mantle of replete Origin and End of existence, earthly representatives who take on titles such as Supreme Pontiffs, Ayatollahs, and other aspirants to the Divine Will. On the secular side, for three quarters of the last century, the world was obsessed or terrified by, dismissive or homicidal towards, the Ideal as a materialist Utopia whose custodianship belonged to an elect, the expositors of the dialectics of class formation to whose Immanence millions were sacrificed – from 'revisionist' or skeptical intellectuals to befuddled peasants. For the paracletes of that Will, History was working in a discernible mechanistic fashion, stage by stage, dialectically ascending towards the pinnacle of the Ideal where all social contradictions would be dissolved and humanity would emerge as one classless, egalitarian paradise.

Now what do all these stages have in common, or perhaps we should ask instead, what was it in these models that made them such irresistible - indeed optimal - propositions for an illiterate soldier that he ordered his speech-writers to couch his ascension in such imperial terms? The answer has been provided: imperial absolutism. The centralism of power, and the opportunity it offers – for a modern autocrat – for the subjugation of – let's use the language of the masses themselves – his betters, who must be accounted in their millions. I picture him saying to his speech-writers – *Let these people know we mean business!* Details of power exertion would follow later, as improvisation responded to exigencies, the unpredictable of a restive polity that was progressively robbed its voice, its franchise. In

some such cases, where the identity of the polity had been brazenly stolen, we would witness the bestowal of a new synthetic identity, all mirroring the crafted image of the new national imperator, spelling the eradication of choice and diversity in development initiatives, in creative idioms - sometimes even all the way down to mundane, every day attire.

Recall, for instance, the Utopia of Mao Ze Dong during the Cultural Revolution, the mandatory outfit that turned that vast nation of millions into virtually a mannequin parade ground of one stodgy couturier only – the so-called Mao suit that however became the fashion sign of arm-chair radicalism all over the world. Against the Mao suit, even the poster-proud Che Guevara rakish beret came off second-best. Today, North Korea has taken sartorial uniformity beyond the wildest drabness of the Chinese cultural imperators. There was the mercifully brief comic opera of Marxist adventurism of the Republic of Benin which, may I remind you? Also took time off to cultivate that sartorial equalizer. More gruesomely however was its adoption by the Marxist terror of Miriam Mengistu's Dergue in Ethiopia, albeit not very successfully, I seem to recall. Indeed the revolt was such that the order was quietly left to lapse – far too many torture sessions and executions to plan!

On the opposing end of the continent's ideological axis was the narcissist Mobutu Sese Seko, whose public servants were coerced into wearing his image on their Afro-suits, also tailored in the cut of the Leader's – but with cheaper material, naturally. Nor must we omit, on the theocratic side, the holy terror of the Taliban. In all these instances we encounter the absurd extreme of despotic imposition of conformity in matters that extend to clothing, adornment, width and thickness of veils, length of beards, and lengths of skirts - some mystic virtue in these outward expressions that will propel such societies towards the Ideal state of ideological perfectibility. Such accoutrements are not the end, needless to say, but mere servitors of the ultimate goal – Power, Absolutism, Domination and Control, the eradication of Choice, Volition and Individuality of the many by the few Elect.

This is why, at the end of this century, heirs to the histories of others, we are obliged to be extremely chary of centralist motions of control propagated by ideologues and political theologians, most often a construct of mystification that has merely provided lucrative careers for the advocates of alienated power. The Ideal realm, for us, is the humane space that empowers the citizen at all levels of social organisation and enables the fullest flowering of each human potential, as individual, and thus, as the basic, productive unit of larger society. The most congenial systems of governance – such as democracy – for the attainment of this realm may sound prosaic, but their very ordinariness means that the palpable reality of existence is not being mystified, sacrificed to some obscurantist notion of the Ideal, means that the ideal will be found in the very process of the citizen's self-regeneration, the richness of identities within the community to which he or she belongs, and the security of a system that succeeds in merging the realm of self-regeneration with that of a collective undertaking, and an equitable share in the fruits of productive collaboration. In short, we are speaking of a stable, non-grudging polity, the assemblage of partners and equals, not an abstract System serviced by subservient units.

“Let – no – one – test – our – Will?”

If this past century of Rwanda, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, the Soviet Union, Cambodia, Yugoslavia etc., has taught us nothing else, it is that the lure of centralized power exigency must yield to its structured diffusion among peoples along tiers of responsibility, which merely vary from nation to nation because of their different histories and even population sizes. Avoidance of this principle will continue to stress the casing that holds such peoples together. After all, whoever thought that the Berlin Wall, like Apartheid, would fall before the opening of this new century?

Let us, however, give the devil his due. At least, characters like Sanni Abacha were not hypocrites. In a perverse way, they might even be called sincere and honest rulers. So would the late Emperor-for-Life Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who spelt out his imperial agenda and proceeded to costume it in luxuriantly imperial robes, in unabashed

mimicry of Napoleon Bonaparte. He staged, we all recall, the absolutist extravaganza to end all extravaganzas, aided and abetted by the then French president Jacques Chirac who supplied him ermine, scepter, golden carriage that were modelled on the trappings of Bokasa's self acknowledged hero, Napoleon.

Mobutu Sese Seko had already gone one better. Coopting the services of his state television, he decreed for no less than the subjection of the universe to the role of a boundless empire over which he presided, since his image rose with dawn from the horizon, iconically dominating the universe, the one daily image that greeted his captive subjects as they tackled their diminishing breakfasts before setting out for their daily grind. And of course, it was their last image before bed, for Zaire's television station had their orders: they opened the day with the Emperor of the Universe. When it was time to close, the Maximum Leader sank into the night-obscured clouds, taking the sun home with him.

These were, we could claim, the honest raiders on the preserves of human freedom. They announced their projects well in advance, and they kept their word. The hypocrites are the more dangerous, those rulers who, strutting nowadays on the platform of democracy, turn their nations into slave plantations but imagine that they bestride empires that are tailored to their own self regarding. The paradigm of new imperial holdings on the African continent is, let us face it, the slave plantation, the pathetic contraction of the much envied imperial sway, supposedly gone out of fashion. The slave of yesteryear was given the choice to liberate the former slave stockades and let its captives out but no. He substitutes himself for the banished emperor. As the estate shrinks, the imperial persona swells to fill the vacuum. Aime Cesaire's *King Christophe* provides us a chastening drama of this lesson in transformation, where the erstwhile victim becomes the spitting image of the very persona he abhorred, the oppressed a virtual clone of his erstwhile oppressor.

The evocation of that entity, 'slave plantation', is of course deliberate, meant to recall us to a certain history that many like to assume belongs to our past. We must spend a little time rubbing on our minds on the earth of that past, since, alas, that very past

dominates the internal relationships within nation entities that vaunt themselves as sovereign states. Let us, in other words, examine the real meaning of the slave status. What does it really consist of, and is there justice in considering much of the African continent, even today, nothing but a glorified slave plantation? No one who has visited North Korea, as I have – would deny that obscene enclave qualifies to be described as one of the pre-eminent slave encampments on the globe, a state whose much advertised achievements were attained, like those of the ancient so-called civilizations the world has known, on the backs of a starving humanity that has been robbed of volition – in sum, on the backs of slaves.

A suitable point, perhaps, to pause and – belatedly, it might appear, but with intent consider what exactly we mean by imperial relations, especially as we have, so far, only addressed the imperialism of nation entities. Among the useful definitions of Empire – Webster's New World dictionary will do as well as any – are 'supreme rule; absolute power or authority; dominion; a state uniting many territories and peoples under a single sovereign power; an extensive social or economic organization under the control of a single person, family or corporation etc. Its derivatives - imperial, imperial conduct, imperialism, imperators etc - follow logically, so that when we speak of empire-building or imperial designs, conduct, policies or attitudes, we understand projects by nation, institution or individuals, or other forms of active entity, designed to expand, transform, or indeed establish zones of exclusive authority, control, or influence, mostly in a unilateral fashion, bring other entities under arbitrary control and domination, usually through force or fear. A close synonym - in political conduct - of imperialism, goes by the name of dictatorship, despotism, or authoritarianism. Its irreconcilable adversary is acknowledged, generally, under the name of - democracy.

We must also be careful to distinguish between gospel and practice. Thus, we can hardly fault Fidel Castro when, in one of his recent commentaries on the global state of affairs, he mocks the unravelling of the ideologically situated democratic America in the following words:

...it is amusing to see the unrest at the entrails of the empire, full of insurmountable problems of the empire, full of insurmountable problems and contradictions.

America is the reference here, most appropriately. That nation, in the time of Ronald Reagan, later to be unoriginally echoed by George Bush, also had recourse to the imperial categorisation, calling her contenders for dominion 'the evil empire'. One of the members of that empire has just launched a sophisticated rocket into space, prompting world alarm. I do not understand why. Given the ambitions of the Baby Doc of the Asiatic hemisphere, Kim Jong II, I have no doubt that this emperor can be trusted to extend his empire into unknown planets, which should be encouraged, since this ambition might tempt him to embark, in his own person, on an inspection tour of his new possessions. The majority of his citizens will line up, I am certain, to wave The Infallible Guide, The Great Liberator, a safe, one-way passage.

And now, we must proceed to the internal conditions that correspond to, or sustain imperial relations in the socio-political practices of society, all the way down to the domestic level. Slavery takes many forms, needless to state. Permit me to offer a contemporary account of the neo-classic mode, a practice yet awaiting its day of total eradication. It will be found in the edition of the French newspaper *Le Monde*, February 17, 2009. The story was filed from the Mauritanian capital, Nouakchott, and narrates the very present ordeal of an escaped slave, Barakatou, featured with her full-face portrait. Barakatou had been at liberty for over six months by the time her story was published, looked after by a local NGO – SOS-Esclaves – set up for that very purpose of terminating the trade and protecting the victims.

Normally, for the informed in these matters, Barakatou's story would be too commonplace to merit re-telling. What makes hers especially relevant is that it was one of those rare portraits we obtain of an individual with a total lack of identity. At an estimated age of between 40 and 50, she has no notion of the whereabouts of either of her parents, sibling or relations, has no identity papers, and is completely illiterate. In short, like the ancient classic slave on arriving at his or her new destination on the other side of the

Atlantic, Barakatou, within the actual borders of her birthplace, is a being without identity. She survives by selling chewing gum and telephone cards, but is constantly cheated by her customers for that very handicap – her illiteracy.

And her own offspring? Let us pause to reflect on their own condition. Barakatou's three children, fathered by three different men, all also slaves, are themselves slaves by birth. When she fled, she was obliged to abandon them to their own choices. We are speaking here of a special class, the *haratines* – slaves or descendants of slaves – who exist at the very bottom of the social pile. Slavery was abolished in Mauritania in 1981 – July 1981 to be precise – and even designated a crime in August 2007, both events taking place over a full century after the abolition of slavery in Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean. However, as observed in that same article and long affirmed in independent studies of the socio-political realities of Mauritania, the slaves, when freed, merely enter another level of social servitude that sometimes results in their own decision to return to their former masters.

Shorn of identity, like Barakatou, with no family structure of their own to sustain them, they are able to obtain a modicum of social security only within the ownership relationship from which, technically, they have been freed. Barakatou discovered this hold most deeply entrenched in her own son, the eldest, who is reported terrified of the very notion of escaping, quite unlike the youngest, assigned to look after the family's livestock, who had escaped some twelve years earlier. The third, a daughter, simply works, as a matter of course, under similar conditions of slavery to her mother's, with another Moorish family.

The mental disposition of the eldest son, which Boubacar Messaoud, founder of SOS Esclaves, and a former slave himself, calls the "culture of submission" or consenting slavery – slavery without physical chains – is what is of the most profound relevance to our times. I wish to call attention to that expression: "the culture of submission" – we shall have caused to refer to it again and again, both directly and indirectly.

But first, that other, complementary description of a social actuality – again to cite Boubacar Messaoud – "slavery without physical chains" – why does it persist? Well, let us devote a few

more moments to this specific variant of a far more comprehensive typology. First, there is the existing class structure of Mauritania, which runs more than less parallel to the racial divide, and continues to designate one race – and the majority at that – as subservient to the other. This structure is underpinned and reinforced in turn by religious teaching through which, right from infancy, the culture of submission to one's fate is one of the main guarantees of entitlement to beneficent considerations in the afterlife. Such considerations forge invisible chains and of course, the lukewarm attitude of the law courts, presided over by adherents of such faith, doubly enervate the resistance will of the enslaved: respect your owners, embrace your condition, in order to earn the benevolent face of God. This was a doctrine whose violent repudiation by some soldiers of African descent some twenty years ago led to a brutal suppression - hundreds of thousands of displaced and repatriated citizens between Mauritania and Senegal - and threatened at one stage to explode into a war between the two nations. So much for this localized reminder, evoked in order to anticipate any sense of complacency or indeed, challenge that other negative 'culture' with which we are constantly confronted – the culture of denial.

Now let us expand the territory of enslavement a little more, or, more accurately, follow the trajectory of that phenomenon wherever it manifests itself, wherever it leads us within the continent.

The UNO estimates that there are some 27 million slaves throughout the world. I estimate a far larger number, in virtual slave encampments, and for the very reasons that can be deduced from what has gone on before. To ensure that that extract is not lost, we only have to ask ourselves, in all objectivity, just what is slavery? Barakatou's eldest son clearly cannot answer that question. The mother could, and did; however, as did the youngest son, which was why both fled their condition. So, we have to ask ourselves just what was this condition that they rejected and from which they fled? From the report – as in many other cases - they were not beaten. They were not starved, perhaps they were not even underfed though, according to Barakatou's testimony, she found herself sometimes accused of, and abused for, daring to eat leftovers directly from the same plates as her masters.

No matter, despite this 'benign' treatment, Barakatou and her youngest son felt that their existence was one that spelt denial of an essential need, a human attribute, however intangible. Not for either the 'culture of submission'. Addressing the differences between one form of social existence and another may enable us to define more satisfactorily just what constitutes slavery, and whether or not virtual slave plantations exist today that have replaced the ancient forms that we all acknowledge, slavers and the enslaved alike. Let us keep at the back of our mind, the following account of a true event for which, to assist in our edification, I turn once more to my own nation space, Nigeria.

It took place in the quite early part of the last century, as narrated in greater detail by Kole Omotoso in his colonial source book, *Just Before Dawn*. A British colonial officer, on his mission of enforcing the abolition of the slave trade on the West African coast and its hinterlands, visited a traditional ruler, an emir and informed him of the intention of the British government to terminate the traffic. The poor Emir looked at him, flabbergasted. When he finally concluded that he had heard aright, he screamed, 'Can you tell a cat to stop mousing? I shall die with a slave in my mouth.'

So, what did that Emir mean? Evidently he was no cannibal, but neither was he talking in abstractions, albeit metaphorically. He was dealing with a palpable human entity. 'I shall die with a slave in my mouth'. Yes, I propose that is where our clue lies, and it can only lead us directly into the territory of Power and Submission, a straightforward axis that is crossed by a more demanding axis - Power and Resistance, or Power and Freedom. This latter most often narrates the true history of societies.

Identical declarations and variations of the Emir's world-view are encountered both in antiquity and contemporary times - "I shall die with a slave in my mouth". It is not much different from the annunciation of that earlier mentioned coup d'état - "Let no one test our will". The annulment of the will of slave, or citizen, the reduction of its humanity to one of disposable matter is already implicit in both declarations of intent, an imposition of a master-slave relationship. Can we, in all objectivity, dispute a claim that apartheid South Africa did correspond overwhelmingly to a denial

of humanity? Or Cambodia under Pol Pot? The condition, 'slave', is a denial of the freedom of action, of the freedom of choice, a condition of bondage, be it of the body or of the human will. We know that certain expressions are justly regarded today to have become victims of devaluation, victims of that vitiating affliction that renders a word flaccid from overuse and misuse: slave is a prime candidate – you are a slave to tobacco, a slave to sex, a slave to junk food etc. Nevertheless, implicit in all those clichés is a psychological – and sometimes even physical – fact of imprisonment, the mutilation of human wholeness that no other word appears to be able to capture.

We move closer to our destination. Are there today stockades, vast, undemarcated stockyards for the containment of slaves on the African continent? I stated earlier that I disagreed with the UNO estimate of the number of human beings existing in slavery conditions, especially on the African continent, and the reason is straightforward. Slavery equates the deprivation of human volition, and history, we continue to remind ourselves, is most often the narrative of the struggle against submission. When you pare down the attributes or, more precisely, the negative attributes of slavery, you are reduced to one irreducible condition: the loss of volition. Now, how is that loss imposed and, most pertinently, in supposedly liberated zones of former alien occupation? On this continent, alas, we have among us those have mastered that art of waiting.

Nominally or – to be absolutely fair – active, even propulsive agents of the struggle against enslavement, they prove in the end far better schooled in the art of moving in with their hands held out in full confidence, for the fall of the overripe fruits of the collective nurture of the tree of liberty. Few societies have been spared this experience of betrayal, revolution after revolution. The round of struggle commences all over again, the wearisome, repetitive scenario of the massed will of peoples to retrieve, again and again, those inalienable rights of the sentient human which are defined variously as freedom, equality, voice, political participation, and access to the means to a meaningful existence. The spectre of the beast of authoritarianism, dictatorship, personality cult, torture chambers and other paraphernalia of the police state looms constantly over social existence, struggle after struggle. The manic

manifestation of power after each contestation has resolutely and consistently debased the inspiration and vision of a true association of man, a cement of selflessness that provided the crucial bond in the most intense moments of the manifestation of a people's collective will against the external forces of enslavement.

The Africa project, today, means different things to different sets of minds. For some, it is a project for the completion of the task of liberation - in every sense – economic, cultural, spiritual and other yet to be thought of vectors of engagement of humanistic forces. For a minority however, it has been, *ab initio*, nothing more than an imperial project, the continuation of the subjugation agenda of European powers, only carried out under the aegis, or the substitution of internal imperators, a substitution for which the African masses are supposed to prostrate themselves in gratitude, since, according to some mystic logic, it is infinitely preferable, indeed honourable, to be ground under by the jackboots of your own kind than pummelled by the fists of outsiders. Contestation of such pernicious doctrine constitutes the life-long occupation of many unsung leaders of thought, some now burnt out cases, a number terminally martyred. One runs into these tireless workers all the time, and sometimes, one is even privileged to have partaken of their task. The number of conferences and working sessions that have been devoted over the years to the resuscitation of a continent assailed by multiple, seemingly incurable afflictions, are numerous and often repetitious.

I have myself participated in some three or four, and could have made a tally of a dozen or more, had I so wished. However, perhaps in contrast with others with a higher threshold for that peculiar form of masochism that is associated with treading the same spoor over and over again, I found myself constantly inhibited by a sense of a Sisyphean curse. The problems are so obvious, the solutions sometimes equally so. Indeed, it would sometimes appear that, as remedial action is being taken in one spot or another along the paths meticulously set out by truly committed leadership – both political and disinterestedly cerebral - the result of informed considerations by thinkers and planners for society, identical fires to earlier trouble spots flare up in another area, as if no serious thought had ever been dedicated to the causative issues. The pattern has become clear: one part of the

polity – the creative - is kept busy, chipping and hammering their way towards needed, meaningful structures, the other part looks on with patronizing amusement, raising and consolidating imperial fiefdoms that will engulf even the labourers of the future.

I recall two sessions of the meeting of minds that I attended during the past decade and a half: one was part of a series entitled AUDIENCE AFRICA – among the participants, Graca Machael, Ahmadou Toure, diplomats, scholars, NGOs, Ministers et al - an initiative of the immediate past Director General of UNESCO. I even chaired some of these sessions. It was in AUDIENCE AFRICA that we succeeded in adopting the proposition that dictatorship is a crime against humanity, one that must be terminated before the end of the millennium. Yes, we recognized that as one of the problems. No one said it was the only problem, or the most profound. What I must stress here, and continue to stress anywhere, is that it *is* a problem, one which millions of sentient beings find singularly obstructive to their grasp of the human collective, or their ability to function as a productive part of the overall entity. No one ever claimed that the end of dictatorship would be the trampoline that would catapult the African continent into the twenty-first century. No, we merely remain adamant that this is one of the malignant imperial retentions of incontinent and alienated leadership, and one that must be eliminated from human history. Much good that hard-won resolution has done the continent! I believe that, since its adoption, there have been some five or six successful military coups, or else the musical chairs of dictatorship, both of the civilian and the military kind, the changing of the guard but not the changing of orientation. Time after time, the imperial domain holds sway, turning newly independent nations into glorified slave plantations.

Regarding those propulsive initiatives that do more than simply denounce the internal imperialism that pervades much of the continent, I would like to call especial attention to one. It was called at the initiative of the Secretary-General of UNESCO, Kofi Annan, and consisted of several sessions that began in Abuja, Nigeria, travelled south to Maputo and ended in Ivory Coast. I found myself able to attend only the last of those series, and we shall have a bit more to

say about its venue in a moment. What was remarkable about the series, made up entirely of African intelligentsia, technocrats and some business entrepreneurs was its comprehensiveness. I believe we thought we had it in us to remake the African continent entirely, and set its face resolutely towards a new millennium. The conference made a point of calling attention to the fact that this initiative was not new. It pointedly advertised similar past efforts, stressing that it was doing no more than attempting to build on earlier reflections and calls to action. Here, for instance, is an excerpt from the preamble to its sittings:

The Commission has taken note of other efforts such as the Lagos Plan of Action, the Arusha Declaration, UNESCO's Audience Africa, MAP, OMEGA" – frankly I do not recall what those last two acronyms stood for, nor care – "plus a number of other encounters, some of which have crystallized into The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), whose principles were adopted by African Heads of State at Lusaka.

In short, no attempt to pretend that this was a new venture, but another building block in the structuring of a continent.

Here are two more excerpts. They are subjectively selected since they reflect some of my own personal concerns, but also to indicate the seriousness of approach and detailed attention that almost unexceptionally characterized these encounters, quite different from those pre- and immediately post-independence gatherings when what was uniformly expected and granted at such gatherings was an over-indulgence in the rhetoric of denunciation against capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Those familiar and justly targeted enemies had served their purpose. The continent of Africa, it had become evident, was now confronted, not with the ghosts of past wrongs, but with the malnourished present and a malformed foetus of the future. Hence, and I quote:

An aggressive effort not only to stem the current brain drain from the African continent, but to woo back the scattered talents from the continent, who are presently devoting their genius to the development of over endowed societies outside the continent. Again, we call upon internal resources, such as the African Development Bank, to assist with the necessary resources those nations that put forward credible plans for creating the necessary conducive conditions for this repatriation of the intelligence bank of the continent.

Brain drain! Question: is the brain drain only outwards, or does the seepage of that invaluable grey matter that has distinguished so many Africans individually in external fields of endeavour – from Headship of the global organization, UNO, to innovative space technology at NASA - not actually begin and end here, within this continent, whose soil is clotted almost everywhere with the drain of that cerebral matter from heads that cannot be fitted into the diminutive hats that are mass-produced in the continent's leadership factories, or imported from the sweat-shops of other lands? The modern head-shrinkers of the African continent will be found in scattered seats of power – where the head insists on its natural functions, creativity and innovation, it is locked away to shrink in sterile cells, clamped between vices, or simply lopped off secretly or in full view, to serve as a warning to the rest of society. What cannot be controlled must be diminished, eliminated or most generously, simply excluded.

President Gbagbo – one of the visionary leaders – at least at the time – had earlier invited a number of African scholars and technocrats to an inaugural meeting – twice postponed – for the establishment of an African Academy for Sciences and the Humanities. It was indeed on that very account that Professor Albert Tedjevore, the leader of the Millennial Commission, had chosen that country as the terminal point for the moving feast of brain storming. How could one not be confident that, in Ivory Coast, we had at least a government whose plans coincided with the vision of the Millennial Commission and would prosecute its propositions with total commitment, even into the corridors of the new Africa Union? Of

course, not long after, Gbagbo's government was preoccupied with more urgent concerns, self-inflicted, than a long-term mobilisation of the intellectual resources of the continent. It had first to secure its very survival, and the survival of the nation, and all because, like so many leaders before him, Gbagbo had not yet learnt to fly of the imperial centrifuge, though placed at a moment in Ivoirian history when he could have done so. Gbagbo may have evinced no interest in any ostentatious wielding the imperial scepter of alienation as some of his peers, but his political conduct was no less a product of the same tendency – operating, this time, through that other fallacy of political leadership – the doctrine of exclusivity. It is a paradoxical aspect of imperial thinking: to consolidate the empire, you exclude what is problematic.

Does anyone still recall one of Nigeria's coup attempts, easily the bloodiest and with the bloodiest aftermath, whose mission statement was the excision of certain parts of the country from the overall polity? Yes indeed, that was yet another unique coup-d'état. The coup-makers began by declaring parts of the nation no longer units of the existing entity. Of course there was a historic instigation to this peculiar proceeding – normally, coups are for territorial expansion and consolidation. In this case, the coup-makers reversed the trend, and formally announced the expulsion of a number of constitutive states from the overall nation entity. Now that was an extreme case. However, it illustrates the facile approach to the intricacies of belonging: you exclude, for whatever reasons – history, nationality, ethnicity, religion, politics, material status, ideology etc – one section or the other of society from participation in the management and enhancement of national existence.

Cote d'ivoire for the Ivorians only? The wealth of Ivory Coast, its very success in self-reliance was built on the sweat of those so-called foreigners, and – do note - these 'foreigners' were not expatriate economic leeches from Brisbane or Outer Mongolia, but fellow West Africans from neighbouring countries, such as Burkina Faso. Many of them had lived in Ivory Coast for generations, knew no other country nor claimed any other nationality. Yet, purely for reasons of convenient political numbers, they were legislated out of the very

land that had achieved its economic stability from their labour. Of course, the example of Barak Obama was not remotely on the horizon, which is the same as saying that the villainous United States of America had yet to shame the continent with her example. This, then, was a boil that was set to burst, and it did.

A functional division of that nation in two – North and South – followed, nor have the reverberations for the West African sub-region totally subsided. The clock was set back, developmentally and psychologically. Other members of the West African sub-region found it especially excruciating, since that new conflict erupted when the region had just begun to stabilize two of its members – Liberia and then Sierra Leone – that had cost the region so much in lives and resources. Nor must we ever forget the clearly problematic destruction of a young generation, a generation that had grown up as child soldiers, with a catalogue of atrocities behind them which, were they older, would have landed them in the international tribunals for crimes against humanity.

Today, the world's attention is focused upon Emperor Mugabe but, Mugabe is not alone. It is just that he has gained exceptional media notoriety in recent times, possibly because of the evocative Hitlerian smudge on his upper lip that passes for a moustache. Seriously though, you will find many of his colleagues, forced into compliance with democratic demands, or simply as a tokenist concession of participatory role to the populace in their own countries, who fervently wish that circumstances within their domain had favoured them into treading the Mugabe path. My own nation, Nigeria, after decades-long affliction of military imperialism, from which she only recently extricated herself, nearly plunged headlong into a Zimbabwean scenario four years ago, thanks to a power-lusting 'democratically elected' leader who nearly bankrupted the nation's treasury in mammoth bribes and diversion of security spending – not to mention the depletion of petroleum revenue – in order to acquire to himself an unconstitutional third term in office.

Having demonstrated, especially in his last four or five years in office, his total contempt for the rule of law, a disdain for the very basic democratic processes that invested power in his person, no one was left

in any doubt that, had the nation failed to stop him, that third term in office would have meant a life sentence for the nation. Every passing day, every purloined cent would have been utilized for his permanent consolidation in power. We were lucky. Other nations on that continent have not been so lucky, and/or perhaps simply not so vigilant.

Just to remind you, here are Robert Mugabe's words, fists pumping the air as the adrenalin shoots up:

They cannot come here and tell us what to do. They are trying to re-colonise us and we say No.

Robert Mugabe in full flight to the cheers of the faithful? Oh yes, but not necessarily. Could it have been Idi Amin? Equally so. Or perhaps Yahya Jahmeh, the hunter of witches and sorcerers in sectors of the nation's political opposition? The script has been played and replayed hundreds of times and over, but at no time had it been so crassly and excruciatingly parroted as recently by the dictator Omar Bashir, the latest murdering imperator of African misfortunes. "They are trying to dictate to us, to recolonize us, and we say No!" Re-colonise? Just who are 'we'? And who are 'they'? Who is truly doing the re-colonizing? Who are the new enslavers, the new imperators of the continent? On whom was a fiery, well-respected African-American leader bestowing the imperial crown of 'traditional' absolutism when, in response to the world's protest over the execution of the writer Ken Saro-wiwa, and his eight environmental activists, this leader uttered the chastising words:

Who are they' - that is, the Western nations - 'to tell an African leader who to hang or not to hang?

Who are they indeed? An emperor holds the power of life and death over his subjects, so who is anyone to query the execution of nine men after a kangaroo trial? General Sanni Abacha, Nigeria's famous emperor over whose criminality that benediction was bestowed, was extremely generous to have granted those men a trial at all. He could easily have hanged them out of hand, and there an end. The Nigerian citizens, under that imperial rule, were little more than slaves in a vast plantation. They were disposable objects,

only little better endowed with volition than our elected pointer, the 40/50 year-old Barakatou of Mauritania, who finally made her leap into the unknown, with nothing but her volition as severance fee.

Nonetheless, the question will not depart, since they are derived from the actualities that provoked the rhetorical cry – ‘Who are they to come and tell us what to do?’ Well, it is that very question itself that provokes in turn another question: who really are ‘we’? Where are we to be found? In the slums, the ghettoes, among the homeless, the hopeless, the over-crowded, unattended sick-beds of bare floor in makeshift hospitals in teeming metropolis? The sub-subsistence wage-earners in their millions on the African continent? In the depopulated HIV ravaged towns and villages of the continent? In zones of power-engendered war, of the destruction of youthful innocence, mass starvation, mass rapes and massacres of innocents? Or in the marble palaces of alienated power whose stock-in-trade is the game of musical chairs, either by arrangement, or through the violent resolution of grenades and machine-guns, but ultimately simply re-cycling themselves? Are ‘we’ perhaps part of the flotsam and jetsam of some two and a half million that crouch, shivering in the desert winds of Western Sudan, mothers, wives and daughters shivering also from the trauma of rape, while one be-costumed clown dances on a party platform with a costume spear and toy shield, flinging his comic defiance at the world? On whose behalf? On behalf of his peers in the Africa Union, and the Arab League, nearly all mired up to their elbows in the blood of their own kind? Or on behalf of those whose veins are opened daily for bleeding from the sustenance of the vampire state?

Let us praise the steadfastness of the Desmond Tutus of our world, and even dissenters like the seemingly reformed Dr. el Turabi, of Sudan, those who have turned their backs on the racial/imperial agenda of their government and called upon a proclaimed criminal, Omar Bashir, to turn himself in for judgment by a court of international jurisdiction. Dr Turabi’s call, an internal one, reinforces the efforts of others to terminate the agony of African authochthones in the Darfur region of Sudan, and enthrone the rule of law and equitable governance in that slave plantation mismanaged by modern Simon Legrees.

The world is no longer made up of imperial holdings of leaders who are ruled by the basest, most atavistic principles of exclusion, separatism and governance through inequitable dealings. The world is moving towards a structuring and enthronement of a common denominator of humanistic usage, one that must question the continuing existence of slave plantations on any soil. The emotive recourse to routine castigation of fading imperialisms, we have learnt to recognize, is simply a camouflage for their replacement by the more vicious, internal imperialisms of the most shameless, treacherous kind, since this new imperialism is raised and sustained on the collective agony of a continent.

“Let – no – one – test – our –Will” or intrude upon it! “I shall die with a slave in my mouth”. These are the mouldy tenets of the old order, yet flaunted on the ensign of Omar Bashir. It forms the gospel of his imperial stormtroopers, the Janjaweed, as they ride out to maim and kill, to rape and degrade, sworn decimators of African humanity. “Kill the slaves” is the overwhelmingly attested battle-cry of the Janjaweed as they descend on horse and camel to slaughter cattle, poison the water holes and village wells, violate school girls in front of their teachers, daughters in front of parents, schoolteachers in front of their pupils. “Ride out”, exhorts Omar Bashir, the latest in the line of modern-day imperators – “ride out and return with a dozen or two slaves in your mouths”.

Those who choose to deny this actuality have a choice: set up your own tribunal within this continent on neutral grounds. Summon Omar Bashir, with his fellow accused, to testify before his peers. Openly! Bring in witnesses under protection to confront him with their accusations. Attestations are not lacking – even without the indictments of the International Court – internal organizations of this continent are more than subsumed under material for Bashir’s arraignment. Lacking such interest, lacking the will to summon one of your own to judgment at the bar of humanity, YOU – and I address directly both the Africa Union and the Arab League – YOU have abandoned all moral grounds for protestation at ‘they’, in relation to ‘we’. We know who we are, and what we are, rejects all notion of solidarity with you. Like Milesovic, like Charles Taylor,

like Fujimori, like Pinochet, like the mass executioners of Cambodia, or the *genocidaires* of Rwanda, there must come a day of reckoning when the world heeds the voices of victims and terminates the cult of power impunity. That day need not wait for a mass murderer to vacate office – indeed the examples of Charles Taylor and Milesovic only complement the formal procedural statement – that the indictment on such grievous charges, charges of anti-human conduct should carry even greater moral and urgent force than charges of material corruption, and thus aid the people themselves to take the step of forcing such accused out of office, a preliminary step to answering to the law of nations.

We opened this address with the example of the Nigerian nation, not often considered deserving of international respect, and for more than justifiable reasons. Nevertheless, as a member of a body recognized as the United Nations Organization, that nation accepted a decision of the judicial arm of that structure, the International Court of Criminal Justice at The Hague, and surrendered its ‘sovereign will’ to that arbitrating body. The decision went against her ‘national interests’, but its government recognized the moral and juridical force of that body, and complied. What is one human being, no matter how seemingly entrenched in the quicksand of arbitrary rule, compared to the justice of millions? And how are they to be adjudged by history, a minority of ruling, parasitic, alienated clique, who so despise the tragic plight of millions as to subscribe vociferously to an amoral, imperial code of solidarity with a defiant violator of our common humanity?

For that humanity to breathe, the puffed-up frogs squatting in the shrinking ponds of imperialist seepage must be compelled to confront and respond to the death-croaks of their expiring victims, and the rattle of restless bones in their shallow graves. It is only fitting that these neo-imperators have their day in court, since this is far more than their victims were ever conceded, in their brief and brutish existence.

Vote of Thanks to Wole Soyinka

By Amandina Lihamba¹

Guiding us through the labyrinth of human life and emotions

How does one venture to thank such eloquence, such depth of conviction expressed with such profound and multilayered language facilities? Today and yesterday, we have been treated to an intellectual feast of stimulation and challenge.

This is not the first time, however, that we have felt the importance of the work of the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere lecturer 2009, Professor Wole Soyinka, in our lives. Many of us can claim to have been nourished, interrogated, condemned, exalted, bewildered, horrified, attracted, and pinned down as we have read, watched, experienced, moved and danced to the rhythms of your novels, your poetry, narratives, plays, lectures, and other creative and intellectual outputs. Yours has been a journey breathtaking in scope full of passion, humanity, anger, frustration, commitment, disillusionment, hope and love. For most of us here, you have carried us with you and made us your companions.

Some of us started our journey with you when we met the blind man in the Swamp Dwellers and searched for an understanding in the mystic's woods and prophecies. We laughed and were tickled at the cunning of the old Baroka and winced at the callousness of what was passing for modernity in the Lion and Jewel. The Jero plays brought both interrogation and the culpability of the human spirit ready to exploit and available for exploitation for those in the know. The African independence, its past and future was graced in A Dance in the Forests which both warned us and underscored the sumptuousness of the African idioms of communication and

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performance, the imagery, the language and the metaphysics. Can an individual escape his/her fate prescribed in the cosmology of existence? We pondered and wondered with Sunman in the Strong Breed why Eman should have ran away from being the people's redeemer/cleanser in his community only to end up a medium, one sacrifice of a similar nature in a strange land? Questions of existence were brought to the fire again in *The Road* and we were confronted with the post independence corruption and sterility in Kongi's Harvest whose successors were so well articulated later in *A Play of Giants*.

We followed as you enabled us to ponder issues of the individual and community, cosmology and metaphysics, history, ritual, the African experience, world view, the aesthetics of creation and literature, the barbarity and brutality of oppression, injustice and greed but also the celebration of the indomitable sprit of peoples through *Death and the King's Horseman*, *The Bacchae* of Euripides, *Opera Wonyosi*, *King Baabu*, *The Interpreters*, *Madmen and Specialists*, *Camwood on the Leaves*, *Myth Literature and the African World View*, *Art, Dialogue and Outrage*, *The Forest of a Thousand Demons*, *I Danre and Other Poems*, *Ogun Abibiman*, *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay*, *A Shuttle in the Crypt*, *Mandela's Earth and other Poems*, *From Zia, with love*, *The Burden of Memory*, *Ibadan*, *The Muse of Forgiveness*, *The Open Sore of a Continent*, *Climate of Fear*, *A Scourge of Hyacinths*, *Requiem of a Futurologist and the Beautification of Area Boy*. *Poems from Prison*, *The Man Died* and *Season of Anomy* invited us to experience prison thoughts and inspiration arising from incarceration and confinement of both body and spirit.

Who can forget *Ake* which brought all as back to the early years of growing up and gave us a glimpse of the future, a future which has brought us here, where we are today.

The "New Imperialisms" which you have so eloquently spoken about yesterday and today has given us much to reflect upon as intellectuals and Africans within the context of the legacies of Nyerere and Nkrumah.

Yesterday, you started with a question: Whose Empire is it anyway?

You gave a comprehensive tour of how and when some humans have occupied and continue to be preoccupied with the consolidation of empires and with empire building using various ideologies and thus engendering imperial contests for global conquest. This is the context of Africa's past and present in the nexus of power and freedom. What is the antithesis to imperialism then? We ask? A question you also have posed, directly and indirectly, addressed variously and so we shall take it as a challenge and issues for continued reflection.

Today, you started with another question! What is slavery got to do with it? The image of the African State as a slave plantation gives us many issues to reflect upon. If a slave state means the perpetuation of a culture of submission and denial – denial of voice, of choice, loss of volition and the mutilation of human wholeness - then what resources exist to enable us to create a human space in which citizens can express themselves as an assemblage of equals? How do we lead our leaders? We are confronted with multilayered contradictions and conflicts in the labyrinth of identity crises. We thank you for directing us to these reflections.

2

Samir Amin

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Distinguished Lecturer, 2010

Long Road to Socialism

Professor Samir

Citation Read by Professor Issa Shivji

Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, Mr. Fulgence Kazaura, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Rwekaza Mukandala, our Guest of Honour Ms. Samia Nkrumah, our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer-designate Professor Samir Amin, distinguished academics, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me add a few words of welcome to those of the Vice-Chancellor. It is really a great pleasure to have you all here. This is a great gathering – I shall not say ‘historic’ - that is for future historians to determine. But it is a great meeting – for two reasons.

First, it is because present here are representatives of *three* generations of pan-Africanists and advocates of African freedom. In comrade Marcelino Dos Santos from Mozambique, we have a fine representative of the first-generation of African nationalists who fought for independence from colonialism. Comrade, we are very happy to have you with us, particularly in the month of April when, like our Mwalimu, you are celebrating your birthday – your 81st birthday.

Then our sister Samia Nkrumah represents the second generation of African nationalists. She is a member of Ghana’s parliament, the country of the great Kwame Nkrumah, for whom Ghana’s independence was incomplete without the independence of the whole of Africa – and the independence of the whole of Africa would be fragile, he said, without African unity. History has proved him right. We are living that fragility.

Then we have the third generation – a kind of contrast – represented in people like Gacheche Gachihi from Kenya – he is also a member of parliament – but he is a member of *Bunge la Wananchi* – the People’s Parliament.

And, of course, without being immodest we have this in-between generation who matured politically in the post-independence period – people like Hon Kategaya, Hon Peter Anyang' Nyongo (who will be joining us tomorrow) and myself. This in-between generation did not know what to make of independence. Some joined the state to enjoy the fruits of independence while others thought they could fight for real independence from outside the state.

The second reason why this is a great gathering is because we are reflecting on the Arusha Declaration. It is a great document – it represents those from the first generation who had a vision of what African independence should be. The vision might not have succeeded but it has left us with a legacy we ought not to ignore.

Before I get carried away, let me now come to the task at hand – to introduce our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer. Professor Samir Amin. He was never in-between. He knew all along what he wanted, and what independence should be.

Samir Amin became a socialist at the age of six! Once, when he was five or six, he accompanied his parents – both of whom were medical doctors – to a popular district of Port Said. As he came out of the car, he saw a child picking up rubbish from the ground to eat. “Why is he doing that?” he asked. His mother replied: “Because the society we have is bad and forces the poor to live like that.”

“Then I’ll change society,” Samir promised. And he has kept his promise. Samir has been involved in changing society throughout his life, on whatever front available, from writing, speaking, to confronting imperialist institutions and organising the World Social Forum.

Professor Samir Amin has worked in the planning ministries in Egypt and Mali, led the Institute of Development Planning in Dakar for 10 years, from 1970 to 1980 and since then he has been the Director of the Third World Forum.

He has written over 30 books and numerous articles. His works have been very influential, inspiring generations of young radicals, quite a few of whom are present in this hall, though, probably, not as young now. One of the early articles by Samir that I read when still

a student was called *Class Struggles in Africa*. It was published in a monthly review called *Revolution* edited by him and supported by, among others, Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu.

One of his early publications that has stood the test of time was *Accumulation on a World Scale*, published in two volumes by Monthly Review. Originally, it was his Ph.D. thesis, completed in 1957. I read it during the heyday of militant student activism on this Campus. I must confess that I did not understand it fully but read it from cover to cover. During those days, we had the unspoken moral principle that you had to read a book from cover to cover. Not doing so would be tantamount to an insult - not to the author but to the book!

As a militant Marxist scholar, Samir Amin has two outstanding qualities. He has been consistent and passionate throughout his life in the advocacy and defence of human emancipation from the vicious capitalist and imperialist system, regardless of the changing intellectual fashions. On this, he is uncompromising. Second, he has consciously done everything possible and seized every opportunity available to provide space, a forum, and a training ground for young African scholars. Many of my contemporaries will recall the marvellous seminars of IDEP (UN Institute of Development Planning) that we used to attend. These were not exclusive stakeholder workshops, organised with donor money, in exclusive 5-star hotels from which many a young scholar is barred. They were held on this campus in Arts Lecture Theatre A. Not only did we attend and participate in these seminars, but collected invaluable material in the form of handouts, which we have treasured to this day.

Finally, may I remind everyone present that Samir Amin was the founder of our beloved pan-African organisation CODESRIA, almost four decades ago? That was a great vision. Samir, we can never thank you enough, for this great contribution to committed African scholarship.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished academics and honourable guests: I am indeed very proud today to present to you Samir Amin, as the Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer for the year 2010.

Professor Issa Shivji

12/04/2010

Long Road to Socialism I

The end of the crisis of capitalism or capitalism in crisis?

Capitalism, a parenthesis in history

The principle of endless accumulation that defines capitalism is synonymous with exponential growth and the latter, like cancer, leads to death. John Stuart Mill, who recognised this, imagined that a “stationary state of affairs” would put an end to this irrational process. John Maynard Keynes shared this optimism of Reason. But neither was equipped to understand how the necessary defeat of capitalism could prevail. By contrast, Marx, by giving proper importance to the new class struggle, could imagine the reversal of power of the capitalist class, concentrated nowadays in the hands of the ruling oligarchy.

Accumulation, which is also synonymous with pauperisation, provides the objective framework of the struggles against capitalism. But accumulation expresses itself mainly in the growing contrast between the affluence of the societies in the centre (of the world system) who benefit from the imperialist rent and the misery of the societies at the dominated peripheries. This conflict becomes therefore the central axis of the alternative between “socialism and barbarism”.

Historically “real existing” capitalism is associated with successive forms of accumulation by dispossession, not only at the beginning (“primitive accumulation”) but also at each stage in the unfolding of the capitalist system. Once properly constituted, this “Atlantic” capitalism sought to conquer the world and remake it on the basis of permanent dispossession of the conquered regions, which in this process became the dominated peripheries of the system.

This “victorious” globalisation has proved unable to impose itself in a durable manner. Just about half a century after its triumph

(which appeared to inaugurate the “end of history”), this model was questioned by the revolution of the Russian semi-periphery and the victorious liberation struggles in Asia and Africa which constitute the history of the twentieth century – the first wave of struggles in favour of the emancipation of the workers and the peoples.

Accumulation by dispossession continues before our very eyes in the recent modern capitalism of the contemporary “oligopoles”. In the centres, monopoly rents – whose beneficiaries are the oligopolistic plutocracies – are synonymous with the dispossession of the entire productive basis of society. In the peripheries, this pauperising dispossession manifests itself in the expropriation of the peasantry and the plundering of natural resources of the regions in question. Both these practices constitute the essential pillars of the strategies of expansion of the late capitalism of the “oligopoles”.

In this spirit, I situate the “new agrarian question” at the heart of the challenge for the twenty-first century. The dispossession of the peasantry (in Asia, Africa and Latin America) is the major contemporary form in the tendency towards pauperisation (in the sense which Marx ascribed to this “law”) linked to accumulation. Its implementation cannot be dissociated from the strategies of imperialist rent-seeking and rent-capturing by the “oligopoles”, with or without bio-fuels. I deduce from this that the development of the struggles on the ground, the responses that will emerge through these struggles to the future of the peasant societies in the South (almost half of mankind) will largely determine the capacity or otherwise of the workers and the peoples to produce progress on the road to constructing an authentic civilisation, liberated from the domination of capital, for which I do not see any name other than “socialism”.

The plundering of the South’s natural resources, which is demanded by the pursuit of the model of wasteful consumption to the exclusive benefit of the North’s affluent societies, destroys any prospect of development worthy of the name for the peoples in question and therefore constitutes the other face of pauperisation on a worldwide scale. In this spirit, the “energy crisis” is neither the product of the rarefaction of certain resources necessary for

production (oil, obviously) nor the outcome of the destructive effects of energy-devouring forms of production and consumption that are currently in place. This description – which is not wrong – fails to go beyond banal and immediate evidence. The “energy crisis” is the product of the will of “oligopoles” and a collective imperialism to secure a monopoly of access to the planet’s natural resources, whether these be scarce or not, in such a way as to appropriate the imperialist rent – even if the utilisation of these resources remained the same as it is now (wasteful and energy-devouring) or if it were subject to “environmentally friendly” measures and new correctives. I deduce from this that the pursuit of the expansionist strategy of the late capitalism of “oligopoles” will inevitably clash with the growing resistance of the nations of the South.

The current crisis is therefore neither a financial crisis nor the sum of multiple systemic crises but the crisis of the imperialist capitalism of “oligopoles” whose exclusive and supreme power risks being questioned once more by the struggles of the entire popular classes and the nations in the dominated peripheries, even if they are apparently “emerging markets”. This crisis is also at the same time a crisis of US hegemony. Taken together, the following phenomena are inextricably linked to one another: the capitalism of “oligopoles”, the political power of oligarchies, barbarous globalisation, financialisation, US hegemony, the militarisation of the way globalisation is operated in the service of “oligopoles”, the decline of democracy, the plundering of the planet’s resources, and the abandoning of development for the South.

The real challenge is therefore as follows: will these struggles manage to converge in order to pave the way – or ways – for the long route towards the transition to world socialism? Or will these struggles remain separate from one another, or will they even clash with each other and therefore become ineffective, leaving the initiative to the capital of the “oligopoles”?

From one long crisis to another

The financial meltdown in September 2008 probably took by surprise the conventional economists who advocated “happy globalisation” and threw some of the fabricators of the liberal discourse, triumphant since the “fall of the Berlin wall”, into common parlance. If however, this event did not surprise me – I expected it (without of course predicting its date, like Mrs Soleil) - it is simply because for me it is part of the long unfolding of the crisis of an ageing capitalism, begun in the 1970s.

It is good to return to that first long crisis of capitalism, which fashioned the twentieth century, as the parallel between its stages and those of the current one is very striking.

Industrial capitalism, which was triumphant in the nineteenth century, entered a crisis from 1873 onwards. Profit rates dropped, for the reasons highlighted by Marx. Capital reacted by a double movement of concentration and globalised expansion. The new monopolies confiscated, in addition to their profits, a rent levied on the massive added value generated by the exploitation of labour, thus reinforcing the colonial conquests of the planet. These structural transformations allowed a new surge in profits. These transformations led to the “*belle époque*” – from 1890 to 1914 – which is the period of globalised domination of the capital owned by the financialised monopolies. The dominant discourses of that time praised colonisation (“civilising mission”) and described globalisation as synonymous with peace, earning the support of the workers’ social democracy.

However, the “*belle époque*”, announced as the “end of history” by the ideologues of this period, ended in the First World War, as only Lenin had presaged. And the period following and lasting beyond the Second World War was the period of “wars and revolutions”. In 1920, after the Russian Revolution (the “weak link” of the system) had been isolated following the defeat of the hopes of revolution in central Europe, the capital of the financialised monopolies restored against all odds the system of the “*belle époque*”; a restoration

denounced by Keynes at the time, which was at the origin of the financial collapse of 1929 and the resulting Great Depression lasting to the beginning of the Second World War.

The “long twentieth century” – 1873-1990 – is therefore both the century of the deployment of the first systemic and profound crisis of ageing capitalism (to the point where Lenin thought that this capitalism of monopolies constitutes the “supreme phase of capitalism”) and that of the first triumphant wave of anti-capitalist revolutions (Russia, China) and the anti-imperialist movements of Asia and Africa.

The second systemic crisis of capitalism began in 1971, almost exactly a century after the commencement of the first. It started with the abandonment of the gold convertibility of the dollar, and was followed by the collapse of profit rates, investment levels and growth rates (all which never again reverted to the levels of the period 1945-75). Capital responded to the challenge as in the previous crisis, by a double movement of concentration and globalisation. As such, capital established structures that defined the second “*belle époque*” (1990-2008) of financialised globalisation, allowing oligopolistic groups to levy their monopoly rent. The same discourse accompanied this process: the “market” guarantees prosperity, democracy and peace; it’s the “end of history”. The same rallying occurred, this time by the European socialists, to the new liberalism. However, this new “*belle époque*” was from the onset accompanied by war, the war of the North versus the South, started in 1990. Just as the first financialised globalisation had led to 1929, so the second produced 2008. Today we have reached this crucial moment, which announces the probability of a new wave of “wars and revolutions”. This is even more so since the ruling powers do not envisage anything other than the restoration of the system as it was before the financial meltdown.

The analogy between the unfolding of these long, systemic crises of ageing capitalism is striking. There are nonetheless differences whose political significance is important.

Crisis of capitalism or capitalism in crisis?

Behind the financial crisis, a systemic crisis of the capitalism of oligopolies

Contemporary capitalism is first and foremost a capitalism of “oligopolies” in the full sense of the term (which so far capitalism was only in part). What I mean by this is that the “oligopolies” alone command the production of the economic system in its entirety. They are “financialised” in the sense that they alone have access to capital markets. This financialisation grants the monetary and financial market – their market, in which they compete with each other – the status of dominant market, which in turn fashions and commands the labour and commodity exchange markets.

This globalised financialisation expresses itself by a transformation of the ruling bourgeois class, which has become a rent-capturing plutocracy. The oligarchs are not only Russian, as is too often presumed, but rather and much more so American, European and Japanese. The decline of democracy is the inevitable product of this concentration of power for the exclusive benefit of the “oligopolies”.

The new form of capitalist globalisation, which corresponds to this transformation – in contrast with the one which characterises the first “*belle époque*” – is also important to specify. I have expressed it in one sentence: the passage from imperialisms (those of the imperialist powers in permanent conflict with each other) to the collective imperialism of the triad (the USA, Europe and Japan).

The monopolies, which emerged in response to the first crisis of profit rates, constituted themselves on bases that have reinforced the violence of competition between the major imperialist powers of the time, and led to the armed conflict begun in 1914, which continued through the peace of Versailles and then the Second World until 1945. That is what Giovanni Arrighi, André Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein and I described already in the 1970s as the “war of thirty years”, a notion that has been taken up by others since then.

In contrast, the second wave of oligopolistic concentration, begun in the 1970s, constituted itself on totally different bases, within the

framework of a system, which I have described as the ““collective imperialism”” of the triad. In this new imperialist globalisation, the domination of the centres is no longer exercised through the monopoly of industrial production (as had been the case hitherto) but by other means (the control of technologies, financial markets, access to the planet’s natural resources, information and communication, weapons of mass destruction, etc.). This system, which I have described as “apartheid on a global scale” implies a permanent war against the states and the people of the recalcitrant peripheries, a war begun already in the 1990s by the deployment of military control over the world by the USA and their subordinated NATO allies.

According to my analysis, the financialisation of this system is inextricably linked to its clearly oligopolistic aspect. What obtains between them is a fundamentally organic relation. This point of view is not prevalent, neither in the expansive literature of conventional economists nor in the majority of critical writings on the current crisis.

It is the entire system which henceforth is in difficulty

The facts are clear: the financial collapse is already producing not a “recession” but a veritable, profound depression. But beyond this, other dimensions of the crisis of the system had surfaced in public consciousness even before the financial meltdown. We know the sort of labels – energy crisis, food crisis, environmental crisis, climate change – and numerous analyses of these aspects of the contemporary challenges are produced on a daily basis, some of which are of the highest quality.

I remain nonetheless critical about this mode of treating the systemic crisis of capitalism which excessively isolates the different dimensions of the challenge. I would therefore redefine the diverse “crises” as facets of the same challenge – that of the system of the contemporary capitalist globalisation (whether liberal or not), founded upon the principle that the imperialist rent operates on the global scale, to the benefit of the plutocracy of the “oligopoles” of the imperialist triad.

The real battle is fought on this decisive ground between the “oligopoles” who seek to produce and reproduce the conditions that allow them to appropriate the imperialist rent and all their victims – the workers of all the countries in the North and the South, the peoples of the dominated peripheries condemned to give up any perspective of development worthy of the name.

Moving out of the crisis of capitalism or capitalism in crisis?

The following formula was suggested by André Gunder Frank and me in 1974.

The analysis which we developed about the new great crisis that we thought had begun, led us to the major conclusion that capital would respond to the challenge by a new wave of concentration on the basis of which it would proceed to massive dislocations. Later developments largely confirmed this. The title of our intervention at a conference organised by *Il Manifesto* in Rome in 1974 (“Let us not wait for 1984”, referring to the work by George Orwell unearthed from oblivion on this occasion) invited the radical left at that time to renounce any strategy of coming to the aid of capital by looking for “exits from the crisis” in order to seek strategies aimed at an “exit from capitalism in crisis”.

I have pursued this line of analysis with a kind of stubbornness which I do not regret. I have suggested a conceptualisation of new forms of domination on the part of the imperialist centres grounded in new modes of control that replaced the old monopoly over exclusively industrial production, which the rise of the countries referred to as “emerging markets” has confirmed. I have described the new globalisation which is being built as an “apartheid at the global level”, covering as it does the militarised management of the planet which perpetuates in new conditions the polarisation which cannot be dissociated from the expansion of the “really existing capitalism”.

The second wave of emancipation by the people: a “remake” of the twentieth century or better?

There is no alternative to a socialist perspective

The contemporary world is governed by oligarchies - the financial oligarchies in the USA, Europe and Japan, which dominate not only economic life but also politics and daily life; the Russian oligarchies in their image, which the Russian State tries to control; the statocracies in China; and the autocracies (sometimes hidden behind the appearance of an electoral democracy “of low intensity”) inscribed into this worldwide system elsewhere across the globe.

The management of contemporary globalisation by these oligarchies of the North is in crisis. But the oligarchies do not feel threatened; they are seeking to remain in power once the crisis is over. In contrast, the fragility of the power held by the autocracies of the South is clearly visible. The model of globalisation that is currently in place is therefore vulnerable. Will it be questioned by the revolt in the South, as was the case in the previous century? Probably so, but that would be cause for sadness. For humanity will only commit itself on the road to socialism – the only humane alternative to chaos – once the powers of the oligarchies, their allies and their servants, will have been defeated both in the countries of the North and those of the South.

Long live the internationalism of the people in the face of the cosmopolitanism of the oligarchies.

Is the reinstatement of the capitalism of financialised and globalised “oligopoles” possible?

Capitalism is “liberal” by nature, not in the nice sense but in the sense of the plain and total exercise of the domination of capital not only over work and the economy but over all aspects of social life. There can be no “market economy” (a vulgar expression for capitalism) without a “market society”. Capital pursues stubbornly this unique objective - money, accumulation for its own sake. Marx, and after him other critical thinkers like Keynes, understood this perfectly, but not our conventional economists, including those on the left.

This model of total and exclusive domination by capital had been imposed ruthlessly by the ruling classes throughout the previous long crisis until 1945. Only the triple victory of democracy, socialism and the national liberation of the people allowed, from 1945 to 1980, a replacement of this permanent model of the capitalist ideal with the conflictual coexistence of three social regulated models - the welfare state of Western social democracy, the “really existing” socialism in the East and the popular nationalisms in the South. The demise and collapse of these three models made the return of the exclusive domination by capital possible, this time described as the neo-liberal phase of capitalism.

I have linked this new “liberalism” to a series of new aspects which appears to me to merit the description of “senile capitalism”. My book with the eponymous title, published in 2001, is probably one among very rare writings at the time which, far from viewing globalised and financialised neo-liberalism as the “end of history”, analysed the system of ageing capitalism as unstable and condemned to eventual collapse, precisely in terms of its financialisation (its “Achilles’ Heel”, as I wrote then).

Conventional economists have remained persistently deaf to any questioning of their own dogma, so much so that they were unable to foresee the financial collapse of 2008. Those which the media have portrayed as “critical” hardly deserve this description. Even Joseph Stiglitz remains convinced that the system as it stands – globalised and financialised liberalism – can be fixed by means of some corrections. Amartya Sen preaches morality without daring to think of “really existing” capitalism as it necessarily is.

The social disasters, which the deployment of liberalism – “the permanent utopia of capital”, as I wrote – would cause, have inspired quite a bit of nostalgia in relation to the recent or distant past. But such and similar kinds of nostalgia cannot respond to the present challenge. For they are the product of an impoverished critical, theoretical thinking which has gradually failed to understand the internal contradictions and the limits of the post-1945 systems whose erosions, diversions and collapses appeared to be unforeseen cataclysms.

However – in the void created by these regressions of critical, theoretical thinking – a consciousness about the new dimensions of the systemic crisis of civilisation managed to chart a path. I am referring here to the ecological movement. But the Greens, who have purported to distinguish themselves radically from both the Blues (the Conservatives and the Liberals) and the Reds (the Socialists) are locked in an impasse, since they have failed to link the ecological dimension to the challenge of a radical critique of capitalism.

Everything was therefore ready to ensure the triumph – ephemeral but in fact experienced as “definitive” – of the alternative to “liberal democracy”. This was a miserable kind of thinking – a veritable non-thinking – which ignores Marx’s decisive argument about bourgeois democracy’s failure to acknowledge that those who decide are not those who are concerned by the decisions. Those who decide and benefit from the freedom reinforced by the control over property are nowadays the plutocrats of the capitalism of “oligopoles”, and states are their debtors. Of necessity, the workers and the people in question are little more than their victims. But this sort of liberal nonsense might at some point have been credible, at least for a short while, as a result of the diversions of the post-1945 systems. The misery of the prevailing dogmas could no longer understand the origins of the crisis. Liberal democracy might therefore look like “the best of all possible systems”.

Today the powers that be, those who did not foresee anything, are busy restoring the same system. Their possible success, as that of the conservatives in the 1920s – which Keynes had denounced without much of an echo at the time – will only exacerbate the scope of the contradictions which are the root cause of the 2008 financial collapse.

No less serious is the fact that economists on the “left” have long since embraced the essential tenets of vulgar economics and accepted the erroneous idea that markets are rational. The same economists have focused their efforts on defining the conditions for this market rationality, thereby abandoning Marx who had discovered the irrationality of markets from the point of view of the workers and the peoples, a perspective deemed “obsolete”. According to this “leftwing” perspective, capitalism is flexible, adjusting itself to

the requirements of progress (technological and even social) if it is constrained in this way. These “leftist” economists were not prepared to understand that the crisis which has erupted was inevitable. They are even less prepared to confront the challenges which are faced by the peoples as a result. Like the other vulgar economists, they will seek to repair the damage without understanding that it is necessary to pursue another route if this is to be successful – that of overcoming the fundamental logics of capitalism. Instead of looking for exits from capitalism in crisis, they think they can simply exit the crisis of capitalism.

US hegemony in crisis

The recent G20 Summit in London in April 2009 in no way marks the beginning of a “reconstruction of the world”. And it is perhaps no coincidence amidst the flurry that it was followed by a summit meeting of NATO, the right hand of contemporary imperialism, and by the reinforcement of NATO’s military involvement in Afghanistan. The permanent war of the North against the South must continue.

We already knew that the governments of the triad – the USA, Europe and Japan – would pursue the only goal of restoring the system as it existed before September 2008, and one must not take seriously the interventions at the London G20 Summit by President Obama and Gordon Brown, on the one hand, and those of Sarkozy and Merkel, on the other. Both were aimed at amusing the spectators. The purported differences, identified by the media but without any genuine substance, respond to the exclusive needs of the leaders in question to present the best face in front of naïve public opinion. “Re-create capitalism”, “moralise financial operations”: such and similar grand declarations were presented in order to eschew the real questions. That is why restoring the system, which is not impossible, will not solve any problem but will in fact exacerbate the gravity of the crisis. The “Stiglitz Commission”, convened by the United Nations, is part of this strategy of tricking the public. Obviously one could not expect otherwise from the oligarchs who control the real power and their political debtors. The point of view which I have developed, putting the emphasis on the inextricable links between the domination

of the “oligopoles” and the necessary financialisation of managing the world economy, is confirmed by the results of the G20.

More interesting is the fact that the invited leaders of the “emerging markets” chose to remain silent. A single intelligent sentence was said throughout this day of great spectacle, by the Chinese President Hu Jintao, who observed “in passing”, without insisting and with a (mocking?) smile, that it would be necessary to envisage the creation of a global financial system that is not based on the US dollar. Some commentators immediately linked this – correctly – to Keynes’s proposals in 1945.

This “remark” rudely awakens us to the fact that the crisis of the capitalist system of “oligopoles” is inextricably linked to the crisis of US hegemony, which is on the ropes. But who will replace it? Certainly not “Europe” which does not exist apart from or outside Atlanticism and has no ambition to be independent, as the NATO summit meeting once more confirmed. China? This “threat”, which the media undoubtedly repeat *ad nauseam* (a new “Yellow peril”) in order to justify the Atlantic alignment, has no foundation in reality. The Chinese leadership knows that the country does not have such means and they do not have the will. China’s strategy is confined to promoting a new globalisation without hegemony – something which neither the USA nor Europe deem acceptable.

The likelihood of a possible evolution in this direction depends once more on the countries of the South. And it is no coincidence that UNCTAD (the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) is the only institution within the UN umbrella which has taken initiatives that are fundamentally different from those of the “Stiglitz Commission”. It is no coincidence that UNCTAD’s Secretary-General Supachai Panitchpakdi from Thailand, hitherto considered to be a perfect liberal, has dared propose, in a report entitled “The Global Economic Crisis” of March 2009, realistic ideas that are part of a second wave of a “Southern awakening”.

For its part, China has begun to build – in a gradual and controlled manner – alternative regional financial systems devoid of the US Dollar. Such and similar initiatives complete, on the economic level, the promotion of a political alliance within the Shanghai

Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which is a major obstacle to NATO's belligerence.

The NATO summit, which was convened at the same time in April 2009, agreed to Washington's decision not to start a gradual military disengagement but instead to reinforce the scope of its military involvement, always under the misguided pretext of the "war against terror". President Obama deploys his talent to save Clinton's and Bush's programme of imposing global military control, which is the only way of prolonging the days of US hegemony now under threat. Obama scored points and obtained a total unconditional surrender from Sarkozy's France – the end of Gaullism – which has now rejoined NATO's military command, something that was difficult during Bush's reign when Washington spoke without intelligence but not without arrogance. Moreover, Obama has acted like Bush by ignoring Europe's independence and giving lessons about how Turkey should be allowed to enter the Union.

Towards a second wave of victorious struggles for the emancipation of workers and peoples

Are new advances in the struggles for the emancipation of the peoples possible?

The political management by the "oligopoles" capital of worldwide domination is necessarily marked by extreme violence. For in order to maintain their status of affluent societies, the countries of the imperialist triad are henceforth obliged to limit access to the planet's natural resources for their own exclusive benefit. This new requirement is at the origin of the militarisation of globalisation which I have elsewhere described as the "empire of chaos" (the title of a book of mine published in 2001), an expression which others have since taken up.

In line with the "Washington project" of military control over the planet and the waging of "pre-emptive wars" under the pretext of the "war against terror", NATO has portrayed itself as the "representative of the international community" and has thereby marginalised the UN – the only institution entitled to speak in this name.

Of course these real goals cannot be openly acknowledged. In order to mask them, the powers in question have chosen to instrumentalise the discourse on democracy and have arrogated to themselves the “right to intervene” so as to impose “respect for human rights”!

At the same time, the absolute power of the new oligarchic plutocracies has hollowed out the substance of the practice of bourgeois democracy. In former times, political negotiation between the different social parties of the hegemonic bloc was necessary for the reproduction of the power of capital. In contrast, the new political management of the society of the “oligopoles” capitalism, established by means of a systematic de-politicisation, has given rise to a new political culture of “consensus” (modelled on the example of the USA) which substitutes the consumer and the political spectator for the active citizen – a condition for an authentic democracy. This “liberal virus” (the title of another book of mine published in 2005) abolishes the opening into possible alternative choices and replaces it with a consensus that is centred on the sole respect for a procedural, electoral democracy.

The demise and collapse of the three above-mentioned social models is at the root of this drama. The page of the first wave of struggles for the emancipation has now been turned; that of the second wave has not yet been opened. In the twilight which separates them one can discern the “monsters”, as Gramsci writes.

In the North, these developments have caused the loss of a real sense of democratic practice. This regression is masked by the pretensions of the so-called “post-modern” discourse, according to which nations and classes have already left the scene and ceded the political space to the “individual,” who is now the active subject of social transformation.

In the South, other illusions dominate the political realm. One is the illusion of a capitalist, national and autonomous development that is part of globalisation, which is powerful among the dominant and middle classes in “emergent markets,” fuelled by the immediate success of the last few decades. Others are the nostalgic (para-ethnic

or para-religious) illusions about the past in the countries excluded from this process.

What is worse, these developments have strengthened the general embrace of the “ideology of consumption” and the idea that progress is measured by the quantitative growth of consumption. Marx had already shown that it is the mode of production which determines the mode of consumption and not vice-versa, as is claimed by vulgar economics. What is lost sight of in all this is the perspective of a humanist and superior rationality, the basis for the socialist project. The gigantic potential which the application of science and technology offers to the whole of humanity and which would enable the real flourishing of individuals and societies in the North and the South is wasted by the requirements of its subordination to the logics of the unlimited pursuit of the accumulation of capital. What is even worse, the continuous progress of the social productivity of labour is linked to the breathtaking use of mechanisms of pauperisation (visible on a global scale, among others, the wholesale attack on peasant societies), as Marx had already understood.

Embracing the ideological alienation caused by capitalism does not adversely affect only the affluent societies of the imperialist centres. The peoples of the peripheries, who generally do not have access to acceptable levels of consumption and are blinded by aspirations to consume like the opulent North, are losing consciousness of the fact that the logic of historical capitalism makes the extension of this model to the entire globe impossible.

We can therefore understand why the 2008 financial collapse was the exclusive result of a sharpening of the internal contradictions peculiar to the accumulation of capital. Only the intervention of forces that embody a positive alternative can offer a way of imagining an exit from the chaos caused by the sharpening of the internal contradictions of the system. (In this spirit, I have contrasted the “revolutionary way” with the model of overcoming the historically obsolete system through “decadence”). And in the current state of affairs, the social protest movements, despite their visible growth, remain on the whole unable to question the social order linked to

the capitalism of “oligopoles” in the absence of a coherent political project that can match the challenges.

From this point of view, the current situation is markedly different from that which prevailed in the 1930s, when the forces of socialism clashed with fascist parties, producing Nazism, the New Deal and the Popular Fronts.

The deepening of the crisis is unavoidable, even if reinstating the system of the domination by the capital of the “oligopoles” were potentially successful, which is not impossible. In this situation, the possible radicalisation of the struggles is not an improbable hypothesis, even if the obstacles remain formidable.

In the countries of the triad, such a radicalisation would imply that the agenda would be to expropriate the “oligopoles”, which seems to be excluded for the foreseeable future. In consequence, the hypothesis that – despite the turmoil caused by the crisis – the stability of the societies of the triad will not be questioned cannot be discarded. There is a serious risk of a “remake” of the wave of struggles of emancipation that happened in the twentieth century, that is to say, a questioning of the system exclusively by some of its peripheries.

A second stage of “the South’s awakening” (the title of yet another book of mine published in 2007, which offers a reading of the period of Bandung as the first stage of this awakening) is now on the agenda. In the best possible scenario, the advances produced in these conditions could force imperialism to retreat and renounce its demented and criminal project of controlling the world militarily. And if this were to be the case, then the democratic movement of the countries at the centre of the system could make a positive contribution to the success of this strategy of neutralisation. Moreover, the decline of the imperialist rent which benefits the societies in question, itself caused by the re-organisation of the international equilibria to the advantage of the South (especially China) could help the awakening of a socialist consciousness. But on the other hand, the societies of the South could still confront the same challenges as in the past, a situation that would produce the same limits on their progress.

A new internationalism of the workers and the peoples is necessary and possible

Historical capitalism is all things to everyone; but the one thing it is not is durable. It is but a short parenthesis in history. The fundamental questioning of capitalism – which our contemporary thinkers in their overwhelming majority deem neither “possible” nor “desirable” – is nonetheless the inescapable condition for the emancipation of the dominated workers and the peoples (those of the peripheries, i.e. 80% of mankind). And the two dimensions of the challenges are inextricably linked with one another. There will be no exit from capitalism by way of the sole struggle of the people of the North, or by the sole struggle of the dominated people of the South. There will only be an exit from capitalism if and when these two dimensions of the challenge combine with one another. It is far from “certain” that this will occur, in which case capitalism will be overcome by the destruction of civilisation (beyond the *malaise* in civilisation, to use Freud’s terminology) and perhaps life on the planet. The scenario of a “remake” of the twentieth century falls short of the requirements of a commitment by mankind to the long route of the transition towards worldwide socialism. The liberal catastrophe requires a renewal of the radical critique of capitalism. The challenge is that which confronts the permanent construction/reconstruction of the internationalism of the workers and the peoples in the face of the cosmopolitanism of oligarchic capital.

Constructing this internationalism can only be envisaged by successful, new, revolutionary advances (like those begun in Latin America and Nepal) which offer the perspective of capitalism being overcome.

In the countries of the South, the battle of the States and the nations for a negotiated globalisation without hegemonies – the contemporary form of de-linking – supported by the organisation of the demands of the popular classes, can circumscribe and limit the powers of the “oligopoles” of the imperialist triad. The democratic forces in the countries of the North must support this battle. The

“democratic” discourse that is proposed – and accepted by a majority on the left as it stands – and the “humanitarian” interventions conducted in its name, just like the miserable practices of giving “aid”, eschew real engagement with this challenge.

In the countries of the North, the “oligopoles” are already clearly forms of the “common good” whose management cannot be left to sectional private interests alone (the crisis has highlighted the catastrophic results of such an approach). An authentic left must dare envision nationalisation as the first inescapable stage of the socialisation of the “oligopoles” by deepening democratic practice. The current crisis enables the conception of a possible crystallisation of a common front of the social and political forces bringing together all the victims of the exclusive power of the ruling oligarchies.

The first wave of the struggles for socialism, that of the twentieth century, has shown the limits of European social-democracies, the communisms of the third international and the popular nationalism of the Bandung era, and the demise and collapse of their socialist ambition. The second wave, that of the twenty-first century, must draw lessons from this. One lesson in particular is to associate the socialisation of economic management and the deepening of the democratisation of society. There will be no socialism without democracy, but equally no democratic advance outside a socialist perspective.

These strategic goals invite us to think of the construction of “convergences in diversity” (referring here to the formula used by the World Forum of Alternatives) of the forms of organisation and the struggles of the dominated and exploited classes. And it is not my intention to condemn from the outset the convergences of the forms which in their own way would retrieve the traditions of social democracy, communism and popular nationalism, or would diverge from them.

According to this perspective, it seems to me necessary to think of the renewal of a creative Marxism. Marx has never been more useful and necessary in order to understand and transform the world than he is today. Being Marxist in this spirit is to begin with Marx and not

to stop with him, or Lenin or Mao, as conceived and practiced by the historical Marxists of the previous century. It is to render unto Marx that which is owed to him: the intelligence to begin a modern critical thinking, a critique of capitalist reality and a critique of its political, ideological and cultural representations. A creative Marxism must pursue the goal of enriching this critical thinking *par excellence*. It must not fear to integrate all the input of reflection, in all areas, including those which have wrongly been considered to be “foreign” by the dogmas of historical Marxisms of the past.

Long Road to Socialism II

The north/south conflict remains central in the socialist perspective

The capitalism of the generalised, financialised and globalised oligopolies has thus become an “obsolete” system, in the sense that the socialisation of the oligopolies, that is, the abolition of their private status, should now become the essential strategic objective in any genuine critical analysis of the real world. If this does not happen, the system by itself can only produce more and more barbaric and criminal destruction – even the destruction of the planet itself. It will certainly mean the destruction of the societies in the peripheries: those in the so-called “emerging” countries as well as in the “marginalised” countries. Under capitalism the process of global polarisation makes it impossible for the peripheries “to catch up” with the centres, compelling them to move ahead on the long road to global socialism. Therefore the North-South conflict cannot be dissociated from the conflict between capitalism and socialism.

The obsolete character of the system as it has reached the present stage of its evolution is itself inseparable from changes in the structures of the governing classes (“bourgeoisies”), political practice, ideology and political culture. The historical bourgeoisie is disappearing from the scene and is now being replaced by the plutocracy of the “bosses” of the oligopolies. The drift in the practice of a democracy emptied of all content and the emergence of ideological expressions that are ultra-reactionary are the necessary accompaniments of the obsolete character of contemporary capitalism.

The domination of the oligopolies is exercised in the central imperialist Triad in different conditions and by different means from those used in the countries of the peripheries of the system. It is a decisive difference, essential for identifying the differences, which separate the nature and the functions of the State in the peripheries

from those in the centre. Emerging peripheries cannot become either “new imperialisms” or even “sub-imperialisms”.

The collective imperialist Triad brings together the United States and its external provinces (Canada and Australia), Western and Central Europe, and Japan. The globalised monopolies are all products of the concentration of the national capital in the countries that constitute the Triad. The countries of Eastern Europe, even those that now belong to the European Union, do not even have their own “national” oligopolies and thus represent just a field of expansion for the oligopolies of Western Europe (particularly Germany). They are therefore reduced to the status of the periphery. Their lopsided relationship to Western Europe is, *mutatis mutandis*, analogous to that which links Latin America to the United States (and, incidentally, to Western Europe and Japan).

In the Triad, the oligopolies occupy the whole scene in economic decision-making. Their domination is exercised directly on all the huge companies producing goods and services, like the financial institutions (banks and others) that stem from their power. And it is exercised indirectly on all the small and medium businesses (in agriculture as in other fields of production), which are reduced to the status of sub-contractors, continually subordinated to the constraints that the oligopolies impose on them at all stages of their activities.

Not only do the oligopolies dominate the economic life of the countries of the Triad, they also monopolise political power for their own advantage, the electoral political parties (right and left) having become their debtors. This situation is, for the foreseeable future, accepted as being “legitimate”, in spite of the degradation of democracy that it involves. It will not be threatened until, sometime in the future perhaps, “anti-plutocracy fronts” are able to include on their agenda the abolition of the private management of oligopolies and their socialisation, in complex and openly evolving forms.

Oligopolies exercise their power in the peripheries in completely different ways. It is true that outright delocalisation and the expanding practice of subcontracting have given the oligopolies of the Triad some power to intervene directly in the economic life of various countries. But they still remain independent countries dominated

by local governing classes through which the oligopolies of the Triad are forced to operate. There are all kinds of formulas governing their relationships, ranging from the direct submission of the local governing classes in the “compradorised” (“re-colonised”) countries, above all in the “marginalised” peripheries (particularly, but not only Africa) to occasionally difficult negotiations (with obligatory, mutual, concessions) with the governing classes, especially in the “emerging” countries – above all, China.

There are also oligopolies in the countries of the South. These were the large public bodies in the former systems of actually existing socialism (in China, of course as in the Soviet Union, but also at a more modest level in Cuba and Vietnam). Such was also the case in India, Brazil and other parts of the “capitalist South”; some of these oligopolies had a public or semi-public status, while others were private. As the globalisation process deepened, certain oligopolies (public and private) began to operate outside their borders and take over the methods used by the oligopolies of the Triad. Nevertheless, the interventions of the oligopolies of the South outside their frontiers are – and will remain for a long time – marginal, compared with those of the North. Furthermore, the oligopolies of the South have not captured the political power in their respective countries for their own exclusive profit. In China the “statocracy” of the Party-State still constitutes the essential core of power. In Russia, the mixture of State/private oligarchies has returned to the State the autonomous power that it had lost for a while after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In India, Brazil and other countries of the South, the weight of the private oligarchy is not exclusive: power rests on broader, hegemonic blocs, including mainly the national bourgeoisie, the middle classes, the owners of modernised large estates (latifundia) and rich peasants.

All these conditions make it impossible to confuse the State in the Triad countries (which functions for the exclusive use of the oligarchy and is still legitimate) and the State in the peripheries. The latter never had the same legitimacy as it has in the centres and it may very well lose what little it does have. Those in power are in fact fragile and vulnerable to social and political struggles.

The hypothesis is unquestionably mistaken – even for the “emerging countries” – that this vulnerability will be “transitory” and likely to attenuate with the development of local capitalism, itself integrated into globalisation, which derives from the linear vision of “stages of development” (formulated by Rostow in 1960). But conventional thought and vulgar economics are not intellectually equipped to understand that “catching up” in the system is impossible and that the gap between the centres and the peripheries will not “gradually” disappear.

The oligopolies and the political powers that serve them in the countries of the Triad continue their sole aim of “emerging from the financial crisis” and basically restoring the system as it was. There are good reasons to believe that this restoration – if it succeeds, which is not impossible, although more difficult than is generally thought – cannot be sustainable, because it involves returning to the expansion of finance, which is essential for the oligopolies if they are to appropriate monopoly rent for their own benefit. A new financial collapse, more sensational than that of 2008, is therefore probable. But these considerations apart, the restoration of the system, with the aim of allowing the expansion of the activities of the oligopolies to be resumed, would mean increasing the accumulation process by dispossessing the peoples of the South (through seizure of their natural resources, including their agricultural land). And the ecologists’ discourses on “sustainable development” will not prevail over the logic of the expansion of the oligopolies that are more than capable of appearing to “adopt” them in their rhetoric – as we are already seeing.

The main victims of this restoration will be the nations of the South, both the “emerging” countries and the others. So it is very likely that the “North/South” conflicts are destined to become much greater in the future. The responses that the “South” will give to these challenges could thus be pivotal in challenging the whole globalised system. This may not mean questioning “capitalism” immediately, but it would surely mean questioning the globalisation commanded by the dominating oligopolies.

The responses of the South must indeed focus on helping to arm their peoples and States to face the aggression of the oligopolies of the Triad, to facilitate their “delinking” from the existing globalisation system and to promote alternatives of multiple South/South cooperation. That is exactly what happened during the Bandung era, even if in conditions different from the present ones. I refer here to my paper published in *Chemchemi* Issue No. 3 (*The Second Awakening of the Global South*).

Challenging the private status of the oligopolies by the peoples of the North themselves (the “anti-plutocracy front”) is certainly an absolutely strategic objective in the struggle for the emancipation of workers and peoples. But this objective has yet to become politically mature and it is not very likely to happen in the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, the North/South conflicts will probably move to centre stage.

Defeating military control of the planet by imperialists

To maintain their monopoly guaranteed rent, oligopolies cannot content themselves with draining their own “national economies” alone. Given their global dimension, they can even drain more from the economies of dominated, emerging and marginalised peripheries. Looting the resources of the whole planet and worker overexploitation provide the material for imperialist guaranteed rent, which in turn, constitutes the condition for a social consensus that has then become possible in the opulent societies of the North. The real challenge confronting the peoples is therefore first and foremost the militarisation of globalisation. “*Empire of chaos*”, as I have been describing the system since 1991, and permanent war against the peoples of the South are synonymous. This is why defeating the Triad armed forces, forcing the United States to abandon its bases deployed on all continents, and dismantling NATO must become the primary strategic objective of democratic progressive forces in both the North and the South.

This is probably the objective pursued by the “Shanghai Group” which has engaged in reviving the spirit of “Non-alignment” to be defined now as “non-alignment from imperialist globalisation and

the Triad political and military project“. It is therefore no accident that the CIA, in its report on “the world in 2025” (see my comments in the May 2010 issue of *Monthly Review*) basically focuses on that Group which it considers – rightly – as the “major enemy”.

Democracy associated with social progress

By choosing democracy as the battlefield to launch their offensive, which primarily aimed at dismantling the Soviet Union and reconquering East European countries, the *Atlantic Alliance* diplomacy had a stroke of genius. This idea had been floated since the 1970s and soon materialised with the creation of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. In a book with a telling title by Jacques Andreani (*Le Piège, Helsinki et la chute du communisme*; Odile Jacob 2005), the author explains how, following the agreement, the Soviets, who expected NATO disarmament and real *détente*, were simply duped by their Western partners. It is noteworthy that the Atlantic Alliance countries’ “democratic” discourse is something relatively recent. Originally, did NATO not accommodate itself to Salazar, the Turkish generals and the Greek colonels? In the meantime, Triad diplomacies lent their support to (and often installed) the worst dictatorships ever in South America, Africa and Asia.

This discourse on democracy gradually replaced the one supported by the Soviets and their allies - “pacific coexistence” associated with “respect” for the political practices of both parties and for “non-interference” in their internal affairs. The coexistence discourse had had its important moments. For example, the Stockholm Appeal in the 1950s reminded people of the real nuclear threat implied by the aggressive diplomacy employed by the United States since the Potsdam Conference (1945), reinforced by the atomic bombing of Japan just a few days after the conference. However, at the same time the choice of this strategy (coexistence and non-interference) was convenient – or could be convenient, according to circumstances – to the dominant powers in both West and East. For it enabled the realities of the respective descriptions, “capitalist” and “socialist”, to be taken for granted by the countries of both West and East. It

eliminated all serious discussion about the precise nature of the two systems: that is, the actually existing capitalism of our era (oligopoly capitalism) and actually existing socialism. At first the new democratic discourse was adopted with much reticence. Many of the main political authorities of the Atlantic Alliance saw the inconveniences that could upset their preferred “realpolitik”. It was not until Carter became President of the United States (rather like Obama today) that the “moral” sermon conveyed by democracy was understood. It was Mitterand in France who broke with the Gaullist tradition of refusing the “division” imposed on Europe by the cold war strategy promoted by the United States. Later, the experience of Gorbachev in the USSR made it clear that rallying to this discourse was a guarantee for catastrophe. The new “democratic” discourse thus bore its fruits. It seemed sufficiently convincing for “leftwing” opinion in Europe to support it. This was so, not only for the electoral left (the socialist parties) but also those with a more radical tradition, of which the communist parties were the heir. With “eurocommunism” the consensus became general.

Drawing the lessons from this victory, the ruling classes of the imperialist Triad have decided to pursue the strategy of centre-staging the debate on “democracy”. China has not been criticised for opening up its economy, but for the fact that its political management has been monopolised by the communist party. Cuba’s achievements, which have no match across South America, have been ignored, putting the focus instead, time and again, on its one-party-system.

Has this strategy been really aimed at making democracy prevail? The answer is clearly “no”, unless one is naive. The single and only objective is to force resisting countries to accept a “market economy” open and integrated in the so-called liberal but actually imperialist global system and to reduce them to the state of dominated peripheries in the system. Once achieved, this objective prevents the advancement of democracy in the victimised countries concerned and cannot, in any way, enhance the response to the “democracy issue”. Incidentally, the “democracy” theme has been invoked only against countries resisting globalised liberal overture. The others have been less criticised for their clearly autocratic political management. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan

are perfect illustrations. But Georgia (pro-Atlantic Alliance) can also be cited, among many others.

At best, the proposed “democratic” formula is no more than a caricature of an “electoral multiparty system” deprived of concerns for social progress but again and always – or almost always – associated with the type of social regression required and produced by the dominant, really existing capitalism (oligopolistic capitalism). The formula has already done a lot of damage to the credibility of democracy because people have given up in disarray and prefer instead to place their faith in backward-looking religious and ethnic illusions.

It appears that it is now more necessary than ever to step up *radical* criticism, that is, the type of criticism, which associates rather than dissociates the democratisation of societies (and not only their practice of political management) with social progress (in a socialist perspective). This criticism cannot dissociate the struggle for democratisation from the struggle for socialism. There can be no socialism without democracy and neither can there be democratic progress outside a socialist prospect.

The chances of democratic progress in the countries that practiced “actually existing socialism”, as well as in Asia and Africa in the Bandung era, would have been much greater, in the medium term if not immediately. The dialectics of social struggles would have been left to develop on their own, opening up the possibility of outstripping the limits of “actually existing socialisms” (which had, moreover, been deformed by a partial adherence to the opening of the liberal economy) to reach the “end of the tunnel”.

An authentic democracy is non-dissociable from social progress. This means it must associate the requirements of liberty with the important ones of equality. Those two values are not spontaneously necessarily complementary, but they are often conflicting. Liberty, associated with ownership on the same footing and sanctified by the economic system, reduces the space of materialisation of the claims to equality, as ownership is necessarily one of a minority, as well as being always unequally distributed. In our present times of the big dominant financial oligopolies, this extreme inequality and the combined liberty/ownership association enforce the true power of

a plutocracy and reduce democracy to the practice of rites without impact. In counterpoint, equality (or at least a certain degree of lesser inequality) can be – and has often been in contemporary history – guaranteed by the power, without much tolerance for the exercise of citizenship liberties. Combining liberty and equality is the essence of the challenge facing contemporary peoples.

The institutional democracy that the dominant ideology proposes to us constitutes an obstacle to authentic democratic progress. The advances of democracy have always been produced by popular struggles, and those advances were more marked in revolutionary periods. The dominant ideology associates “democracy” with “market freedom” (i.e., capitalism, in fact) and pretends they are non-dissociable: no democracy without market – so no conceivable democratic socialism. This is but a tautological ideological formulation – in the vulgar and negative meaning of the term – which supposes a concept of democracy that is truncated to one of the United States. In fact, the history of actually existing capitalism shows that even that truncated democracy has never been completely endorsed by the peoples.

In the centres of capitalism, the advances of representative democracy have always been the outcome of popular struggles, contained as long as was possible by the tenants of power (the owners). At the scale of the system of global capitalism – the true unit in which the development of capitalism moves – the (truncated) democracy/capitalism association is still visibly without real foundations. In the peripheries that are integrated in real global capitalism, democracy has never – or almost never – been on the agenda of the possible, or even thought of, for the functioning of capitalist accumulation. Under these conditions, I will even go as far as saying that democratic advances in the centres, if they have indeed been the outcome of the struggles of the concerned popular classes, have nonetheless been largely facilitated by the advantages of the societies under consideration within the global system. Marx expected important positive effects from universal suffrage: the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism. History has not proved his expectations true because universal suffrage operated

in these instances in societies plagued by nationalist/imperialist ideologies and the true advantages attached to it (cf. Luciano Canfora, *La démocratie, histoire d'une idéologie*, Seuil 2006).

Popular movements and peoples in the struggle for socialism and liberation from imperialist domination have been at the origin of authentic democratic advances, inventing a theory and a practice which associate democracy and social progress. That evolution – superior to capitalism, its ideology and its narrow practice of representative and procedural democracy – was initiated very early, as early as the French Revolution. It expressed itself in a more mature and more radical manner in subsequent revolutions, during the Paris Commune, the Russian Revolution, the Chinese Revolution and some others (those of Mexico, Cuba, and Vietnam), as well as in Asia and Africa in the Bandung era.

The Russian Revolution initiated the great reforms, which determined a possible socialist and democratic evolution - land reform, and the expropriation of capitalists. State control drift would occur later. But it is undoubtedly the Chinese who had enacted the principles of a “popular democracy” (nothing to do with the practice of Eastern European “popular democracies”), holder of true social and democratic advances, defining a phase of the long transition to democratic socialism. Abolition of private ownership of land and guarantee of equal access to it by all were its major axes. Setting in place communes as collective managers of agricultural production, of small industrial units associated with public services (schools, clinics, etc.) could serve as an efficient institutional framework to progressive democratisation in the management of all aspects of social life. The limitations, inconsistencies and regressions of the Chinese popular democracy have multiple causes, well analysed by Lin Chun (*The Transformation of Chinese Socialism*, Duke University Press 2006) - first, the objective contradiction which opposes the three necessary poles of a long-term transition project (national independence, development of the productive forces, progress of the values of equality and socialism), but also – and not less important – the absence of the formulation of formal legal guarantees of the rights of the individual and imprecise institutionalisation of the powers.

The “mass line” which invites the popular classes to formulate their claims, gives them the means to do so, and does not institutionalise the party as a self-proclaimed vanguard which “teaches” the people a truth whose knowledge it monopolises without having to “learn” from the people, stems indeed from a democratic project. That principle is in the Jericho side of the thesis according to which theory is brought from outside the movement. The “mass line” does not constitute, however, a substitute for the institutionalisation of the rights and organisations.

I am not among the people who abstain from severely criticising the authoritarian, if not bloody, drifts that accompanied the revolutionary periods of history. Explaining the reasons underlying them does not justify them and does not reduce their destructive dimension as regards the socialist future they conveyed. Still, is it necessary to remind ourselves that the bloodiest violence has always been the one exercised by counter revolutions? The bloody drifts of Stalinism are not the product of the logic of socialism but the will to stop its progression and substitute it with state control which I qualify as “capitalism without capitalists”. Still, need we remind ourselves of the permanent crimes of actually existing capitalism/imperialism, the colonial massacres, the ones associated with “preventive wars” waged in the present day by the United States and its allies? Under such conditions, “democracy” when it is not simply barred from the agenda, is no more than a masquerade, as we see in Iraq.

Democracy, today in regression around the world, can only make progress provided it takes an institutionalised form associated with social progress, not dissociated from it. Everywhere, even in very different conditions according to whether we are in the centres or the peripheries of contemporary globalised capitalism, the challenge is the same - going beyond both capitalism and representative democracy. In other words, adopting radical positions in those two non-dissociable directions constitutes the condition of democratic progress.

I will now enumerate some general possible propositions, which will enable progress in that direction:

- a) Adoption of charters of rights (national and international charters, specific charters relating to defined areas such as

the rights of women, peasants, workers' organisations, the management of public services, of state-owned and private enterprise, etc.) which dare challenge the sacrosanct dimension of ownership, assert primacy of the values which associate liberty and equality, development and social progress; and of course the formulation of the necessary means for those charters to move beyond the state of lip service.

- b) Reinforcement of the powers of elected parliaments; adoption of the principle of the proportional voting system; abolition of presidential systems should be given high priority in the programmes of a political left-wing dedicated to giving back to democracy its lost meaning.
- c) Opening up of spaces of popular and democratic management in all areas of social services, production units, municipal management and the conduct of struggles to make their legitimacy acknowledged by the authorities.
- d) Restoration of full respect for the nations' sovereignty, knowing there can be no "supranational democracy" if democratic aspirations are violated at the level of States (which is the case in the European Union). Sacrificing possible progress of the more advanced peoples in their struggles in the name of a "long-term" advantage, whichever one, within big regional blocks is not acceptable because the achievement of actual advances in one or many countries can have a bandwagon effect on the others, whereas alignment on the "requirements" of the regional union is almost always alignment with the least advanced. Operating that choice is in fact causing to prevail the dominant interests for which "the global opening up" of markets is of more decisive importance than those of the popular classes.
- e) The challenges facing a radical programme of the proposed model are certainly considerable. Beyond the variety of concrete situations, we can identify three sets of major difficulties: In the countries of the periphery the challenge can only be won if for a long period of transition (of the secular type), the political systems of popular democracy succeed in combining three objectives: i) safeguarding and reinforcing of national

independence in an international multi-polar system based on a negotiated globalisation; ii) unavoidable acceleration of the development of productive forces, without which it is vain to speak about poverty eradication; and iii) the construction of a balanced multi-polar world with the assertion of the growing place of socialism and equality in particular. That challenge concerns three quarters of humanity. But if meeting it determines a parallel progression of the democratisation of society, in the reverse and complementary sense, it seems to me difficult in present times to reach a development worthy of that name (i.e., accelerated, social, if not socialist, reinforcing national independence) by means of “enlightened despotism”. No doubt an enlightened autocracy of that kind would be better than obscurantist despotisms of little annoyance to imperialism. Undoubtedly, there may still exist situations for which we cannot hope much better in the short-term. It seems to me evident, however, that what can be obtained in that non-democratic political context will rapidly bump into impassable obstacles.

- f) Democracy is not a recipe one just needs to adopt. Its construction is an endless process, which makes me prefer the term “democratisation”. In fact, that recipe – the multi-party system and elections – not only confines us to the option of a truncated representative and procedural democracy, reserved solely for the area of the management of political life, and owing to that, perfectly anti-popular in our time of senile capitalism, but also, being associated with economic liberalism, turns into a farcical joke. The recipe strips the struggle for democracy of its legitimacy. Accepting that solution as “less bad”, confines us to a demoralising deadlock, with discourses on “good governance” and “poverty reduction” bringing no responses to the destructive effects of liberalism.

It finally seems to me useful to signal the important options to discuss with regard to the methods of struggle capable of successfully advancing in the directions indicated here. That debate is of direct concern for the “movements” of the social forces. The present time is characterised by extreme diversity of all manner of

social movements of protest and struggle against the devastating effects of the deployment of the dominant strategies in place. But it is just as much characterised by great mistrust towards the forms of organisation and struggle of the historic left wing of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and towards their spontaneous propensity of proclaiming themselves as “vanguards” (a term largely rejected today owing to that). Those criticisms are largely based on a pertinent critical analysis of what the struggles of the last two centuries were. They must then be taken seriously and inspire creative invention of new forms of organisation and action.

In response to that challenge, many “movements” and militants accept propositions which I believe are extremely dangerous. Among these I will at least mention:

- a) *The discourse on “civil society”*: Beyond the conceptual blur, what is meant by that term is largely inspired from a model that praises a-politicism (and, in particular, rejection of party politics) on the basis of a benefit of pretended proximity, grassroots, immediately “useful” action (in reality without the actual capacity of challenging systems of powers seen to be too powerful to be defeated). The method encourages negative evolutions, perpetuating the fragmentation of the movement, if not their transformation into defence “lobbies” for particular interests to the detriment of the general interest. The tradition in the United States, which Negri appraises, inspires largely the discourse on the “multitude”. It finds its ideological foundation in the over promotion of the “individual”, who is perceived as having become the historic actor of transformation, a role which classes and nations apparently can no longer fulfil. That ideology suits the minorities of the opulent West – over represented in the social forums; it does not respond to the expectations of the immense masses of the popular classes.
- b) *The communitarian discourse*: A product almost inevitably born from the diversification of the “origins” of the components of the popular classes (itself produced by the migrations of the past half century). Largely associated with the weakness of the expressions of class and citizenship consciousness, the

communitarian ideology, far from promoting maturation of the mentioned forms of consciousness, perpetuates their underdevelopment. Here again a tradition originating from the United States, where it has precisely fulfilled the function of hindering the maturation of political class consciousness, is today in great vogue in Europe.

- c) The movement's stagnation, trapped by methods and discourses criticised here, the very limited (often insignificant) successes of the struggles in which they engage, encourages in turn alignment to the thesis of picking the "less bad choice" to avoid the "worse". But that choice, being often little different from the worse, has only one impact - demoralising the popular classes.

In counterpoint, I will make the following propositions:

- a) *Organising the convergence within diversity*: this implies of course respect of divergence (including independence of the organisations) but also research for platforms for common actions, capable of promoting convergence. This implies accepting that definition of strategies of action, short-term objectives and longer-term perspectives must be at the centre of the debates, a task to which the World Forum of Alternatives wishes to contribute.
- b) *Rejection of a-politicism*: this reminds us that all movements, all struggles are by nature political actions, and that consequently, associating political parties (or, in case that is lacking, segments of those parties and actors openly present on the grounds of "politics") must not be rejected but sought for.
- c) *The challenge for all movements, small or large, as for all revolutionary or reformist political parties, is of the same nature*: it consists in giving priority to the logic of struggle over that of organisation. The latter logic favours timidity and alignment on the "less bad". The former logic promotes radicalisation of struggles and their will to triumph.

“The environment” or the socialist perspective of use value?

The ecological question and so-called sustainable development

Here again, one has to begin with the real problem: continuous capitalist accumulation would lead to the destruction of our natural environment and ultimately life on the planet.

The capture of ecology by vulgar ideology operates on two levels: on the one hand, by reducing measurement of use value to an “improved” measurement of exchange value, and on the other, by integrating the ecological challenge with the ideology of “consensus”. Both these manoeuvres undermine the clear realisation that ecology and capitalism are, by their nature, in opposition. The “ecological costs” are, in this way of thinking, assimilated into external economies. The vulgar method of measuring cost/benefit in terms of exchange value (itself conflated with market price) is then used to define a “fair price” integrating external economies and diseconomies. In fact, as can already be seen, oligopolies have seized hold of ecology to justify the opening up of new fields to their destructive expansion. The capture of ecological discourse by the political culture of the consensus (a necessary expression of the conception of capitalism as the end of history) has been an easy ride, for it is responding to the alienation and illusion, which feed the dominant culture of capitalism. This culture is real and holds a dominant place in the minds of the majority of human beings, in the South as well as the North. In contrast, the expression of the demands of the socialist counter-culture is fraught with difficulty, because socialist culture is not visibly in front of us. It is part of a future to be invented, a project of civilisation, open to the creativity of the imagination. Slogans (such as “socialisation through democracy and not through the market”) are not enough, despite their power to pave the way for the historical process of transformation. For what is at stake is a long “secular” process of societal reconstruction based on principles other than those of capitalism, in both the North and the South, which cannot be supposed to take place “rapidly”. Socialism is a higher stage of civilisation. But construction of the future, however distant, begins today.

In conclusion, then, two points should be made.

First, capitalism per se is unable to respond to the challenge simply because it is based on the exclusive logics of shortsighted profit. In his time, Marx not only suspected the existence of this problem, he actually had already expressed it through his rigorous distinction between value and wealth, conflated in vulgar economics. Marx explicitly stated that the accumulation of capital destroys the natural bases on which it is built: man (the alienated, exploited, dominated and oppressed worker) and land (symbol of natural riches at the disposal of humanity). And whatever might be the limitations of this way of putting it, trapped within its own era, it nonetheless remains an illustration of a clear consciousness of the problem (beyond intuition) which deserves to be recognised. It is regrettable, therefore, that the ecologists of our time have not read Marx. It would have allowed them to take their own proposals further, to grasp their revolutionary import, and of course, to go further than Marx himself on this topic.

Second, the noise made around the need for a “global” response to the challenge is simply aiming at preventing the nations of the South to make any use – good or bad – of the resources of the planet in order to allow the North to continue its wasting pattern of production and consumption. This is unacceptable.

“Aid”, an additional tool for controlling vulnerable countries

“International aid”, described as something essential for the survival of “Least Developed Countries” (LDCs - UN terminology to designate many African and a few other countries) is relevant here because the real objective of aid, which is destined for the most vulnerable of the peripheral countries, is to erect an additional obstacle to their joining an alternative South front.

Aid concepts have been narrowly framed; their architecture was defined in the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005), a document written by OECD staff and later imposed on recipient countries. The overall conditionality, defined by an alignment with the principles of liberal globalisation – opening up markets, becoming

“attractive” to foreign private investments – is omnipresent. From this perspective, the *Paris Declaration* is a regression compared to the practices of the “development decades” (1960-1970) when the principle of free choice by the South countries of their system and economic and social policies was admitted. Under such conditions, aid policies and their apparent immediate objectives are non-dissociable from the geopolitical objectives of imperialism. Obviously, the different regions of the planet do not have identical functions in the globalised liberal system. It is therefore not enough to indicate only what constitutes their common denominator (trade liberalisation, opening up to financial flows, privatisation, etc.).

Sub-Saharan Africa is perfectly integrated into the global system and not at all “marginalised” as many people unfortunately too often unthinkingly speculate: the external trade of the region represents 45% of its GDP, compared to 30% for Asia and South America and 15% for each of the three regions making up the triad. Quantitatively therefore Africa is “more” and not “less” integrated but in a different way (cf: Is Africa really marginalised? in Hellen Bauer, *History and Philosophy of Sciences*, Ibadan, 2003). The geo-economy of the region is based on two sets of products which are decisive in the shaping of its structures and definition of its position in the global system: (i) “tropical” agricultural exports - coffee, cocoa, cotton, peanut, fruits, palm oil etc. and (ii) hydrocarbons and mining, including copper, gold, precious metals, and diamonds. The first provide the “survival” means beyond the food produced for their own consumption by farmers who are financing the State’s graft on the local economy and also the reproduction of the “middle classes” through public spending. The local ruling classes are more interested in these productions than the dominant economies, who are much more interested in the proceeds from the natural resources of the continent. The interest today is in hydrocarbons and rare minerals; tomorrow it may well be in reserves for the development of agro fuel, the sun (when long distance conveyance of solar energy becomes possible in the next few decades), and water (when its direct or indirect export will be made possible).

The race for securing rural territories that can accommodate the expansion of agro fuels has already started in South America. From this perspective, Africa offers vast possibilities. Malagasy has ignited the movement and has already conceded large tracts of land in the western part of the country. The implementation of the Congolese Rural Code (2008), inspired by Belgian cooperation and FAO, will certainly allow agribusiness to secure agrarian lands on a large scale for the purpose of “developing” them just as the Mining Code had allowed the plundering of the colony’s mineral resources in the past. The “useless” farmers will pay the price; their foreseeable extreme impoverishment will perhaps attract the interest of future humanitarian aid and “aid” programmes for poverty reduction! The new phase of history that has just started is characterised by sharpened conflicts for access to the natural resources of the planet. The triad intends to have exclusive access to this “useful” Africa (that of reserves of natural resources) and prevent the “emerging countries”, whose needs in that area are already overwhelming and will grow bigger and bigger, from gaining access to them. The guarantee of this exclusive access requires political control and reducing vulnerable African States to the state of “client States”. It is therefore not misleading to consider that the objective of aid is to “corrupt” the ruling classes. Beyond financial levies (alas widely known though usually commented upon as if donors played no part in them!), aid discharges very well this political function, it having become “essential” since it has become an important source of budget financing. It is then necessary to conceive aid as becoming permanent instead of preparing for its disappearance through consistent development. Also important is that this aid should not be exclusively and entirely reserved for the ruling classes, the “government”. It should also arouse the interest of the “opposition” capable of succeeding them. At this point, the role of the so-called civil society and some NGOs becomes relevant. To be really politically efficient, the aid in question should also contribute to maintaining farmer integration into this global system, as this integration provides an additional source of government revenue.

Poverty, civil society, good governance: the poor rhetoric of the dominant discourse

This allegedly self-assigned objective of the dominant discourse is “to reduce or even eradicate poverty” by relying on the “civil society” to replace “bad governance” with good governance. The very term “poverty” pertains to a language as old as the world, the language of charity that belongs to the past, not the present or the future. It precedes the formation of a developed language by modern social thinking which seeks to be scientific, that is, by discovering the mechanisms that engender observable phenomena. The massive literature on poverty exclusively – or almost – puts the focus on “locating” the phenomenon and quantifying it. It does not ask some upstream questions such as: What are the mechanisms that engender the poverty in question? Can they be related to fundamental rules (like competition) forming the basis of our systems? And in particular, concerning the assisted South countries, the development strategies and policies designed for them?

Even if taken seriously (and consequently its abusive use overlooked), does the “civil society” concept have the necessary elevation that is required of a concept to kick off and be given consideration in a serious and scientifically-oriented debate? As proposed to us, “the civil society” in question is associated with a consensus ideology - a double consensus: (i) that there is no alternative to the “market economy” (a gross expression in itself) to serve as a substitute for the analysis of past and contemporary “really existing capitalism”; (ii) that there is no alternative to representative democracy founded on electoral multiparty system (conceived as “democracy”), to serve as a substitute for a social democratisation concept which by itself is a never-ending process.

In counterpoint, struggles in history have allowed the emergence of political cultures founded on the recognition of conflict of social and national interests, giving, inter-alia, some meaning to the terms “right” and “left” by which the right and power to imagine alternatives and not exclusively “alternations” in the exercise of

power (changing names to do the same thing) is conferred on creative democracy. "Governance" is an invention substituted for "power". The opposition between the two adjectives – good or bad governance – is reminiscent of moralism substituted for an analysis of the reality, as scientific as possible. Once again, this fashion came from the USA where sermonising has often dominated political discourse. "Good governance" implies that the "decision-maker" is "fair", "objective" (retains the "best solution"), "neutral" (accepting symmetrical presentation of arguments), and on top of all "honest" (even of course in the meanest financial sense of the term). Reading the literature produced by the World Bank on the subject is like re-reading the grievances submitted – in general, by religious and/or law men (few women!) – to the "just despot" (not even enlightened!) in the ancient times of the Orient.

The visible ideology behind this is simply trying to overlook the real issue: What social interest does the incumbent regime, whatever it may be, represent and defend? How can the transformation of power be advanced such that it gradually becomes the instrument of the majorities, in particular, that of the victims of the system as it is, given that the multiparty electoral recipe has shown its limitations on this aspect?

Post-modernism concludes the discourse labelled by some as the "new spirit of capitalism", but which is better described as the ideology of tardy capitalism/imperialism of oligopolies. I wish to refer the reader to the book written by Nkolo Foe (*Le Post modernisme* 2009) who strongly established the perfectly functional substance aimed at serving the real interests of the dominant forces. Modernism was inaugurated by the discourse of Enlightenment in the European 18th century, in parallel with the triumph of the European historical form of capitalism and imperialism, the latter being coterminous, and later conquering the world. It conveys its contradictions and limitations. The desire for universalism, which it formulates, is defined by the affirmation of human rights (not necessarily women's), which in substance are those of bourgeois individualism. What is more, the capitalism with which this form of modernity is associated is really an imperialism that denies similar

rights to non-European peoples conquered and subjected to the demands of producing an imperialist-guaranteed income for the benefit of oligopolies. Criticism of this bourgeois and capitalist/imperialist modernity is certainly necessary. The new Reason wanted to be emancipating. And it was, to the extent that it freed society from the alienations and oppressions of the old regimes. As such it constituted a guarantee for progress, more precisely a form of limited and contradictory progress, because this Reason is that of a society ultimately managed by capital.

Post-modernism proposes no radical criticism that would lead to the emancipation of the individual and society. Instead, its proposal is to return to pre-modern and pre-capitalist alienations. So the forms of sociability it tries to promote are bound to be in keeping with “tribalist identity”, membership of (para-religious or para-ethnic) communities at the opposite extremes of what is required to deepen democracy, which has become synonymous with “tyrannising the people” who dare question the wise management exercised by *executives* at the service of oligopolies. The criticisms levied against the “grand discourses” (Enlightenment, democracy, progress, socialism, national liberation) are not future-oriented; instead they look back at a perfectly idealised, imaginary and false past. The extreme fragmentation of popular majorities has thus been facilitated, making them adjust to the logic of reproducing the domination of oligopolies and imperialism. Fragmentation does not hinder domination; it even makes it easier. Far from being a conscious and lucid agent of social transformation, the individual in question is enslaved to triumphant merchandising. The citizen gives in to being a consumer/spectator, no longer a person longing for emancipation, but rather a colourless submissive subject.

Conventional economics: an ideological instrument that is central to capitalist reproduction

The discourse of conventional economics refers to the current system as “the market economy”. This term is inadequate, even deceptive: it could equally well describe England in the 19th century, China of the Sung and Ming dynasties and the towns of the Italian Renaissance.

The theory of the “market economy” has always been the backbone of “vulgar economics”. This theory immediately eliminates the whole essential reality, i.e. social relationships of production (particularly, ownership as the immediate expression of these relationships, promoted to a sacred principle). It is replaced by the hypothesis of a society constituted by “individuals” (who, in the final analysis, become active agents in the reproduction of the system and its evolution). These “individuals” (*homo oeconomicus*) are ahistorical, identical with those who, since the origins of humanity (Robinson Crusoe) have possessed the same, unchanging qualities (egoism, the capacity to calculate and make choices that benefit themselves). Thus building the “market economy” on these foundations does not represent a serious formulation of historical and real capitalism. It constructs an imaginary system into which it integrates almost nothing of the essentials of the capitalist reality.

Marx’s *Capital* unmask the ideological nature (in the functional sense of the word) of this construction of vulgar economics since Frédéric Bastiat and Jean-Baptiste Say, of which the function has been simply to legitimise the existing social order, likening it to a “natural and rational order”. The later theories of value – utility and general economic equilibrium, developed in response to Marx in the last third of the nineteenth century, as well as those of their subsequent heir, contemporary mathematicised economics, described as classic, neoclassic, liberal, neoliberal (the name does not really matter) – do not diverge from the framework defined by the basic principles of vulgar economics.

The discourse of vulgar economics helps to meet the requirements of the production and reproduction of actually existing capitalism.

It brings to the fore a eulogy of “competition” above everything else, considered as the essential condition of “progress”. It denies this attribute to solidarity (in spite of examples from history), which is confined to a straitjacket of compassion and charity. It can be competition between “producers” (i.e. capitalists, without much considering the oligopolistic form of contemporary capitalist

production) or between “workers” (which assumes that the unemployed, or the “poor” are responsible for their situation). The exclusivity of “competition” is reinforced by the new language (“social partners”, instead of classes in conflict) as well as by practices – of, among others, the European Union Civil Service Tribunal, which is a fierce partisan of the dismantling of trade unions, an obstacle to competition between workers.

The adoption of the exclusive principle of competition also invites society to support the aim of building a “consensus” that excludes the imaginary prospect of “another society”, based on solidarity. This ideology of a consensus society, well on the way to being adopted in Europe, destroys the transformative outreach of the democratic message. It conveys the libertarian rightwing message that considers the State – of whatever stripe – as “the enemy of freedom” (to be interpreted as the enemy of the freedom of capital enterprise) while the practice of democracy is amputated from social progress.

The North-South Conflict in Globalisation in Crisis

Global capitalism does not call into question the opposition centre/periphery; on the contrary it accentuates its conflict.

Contemporary capitalism has reached an extreme stage of centralisation of capital ownership: three to five thousand groups, nearly all located in the countries of the Triad (United States, Europe, Japan) control, for the first time in history, all the systems of production, distribution and consumption at the level of the nations of the Centre and, indirectly, that of the global system. These generalised monopolies centralise for their benefit an increased imperialist rent. The latter comes from multiple sources that are visible (the low wages paid in the export industries of the peripheries) or hidden behind their control of the globalised financial market, overprotection of industrial patents, their quasi-exclusive access to the natural resources of the whole planet, and lastly, the globalisation of the powerful political means at the disposal of Western powers, strengthened by their quasi monopoly over weapons of mass

destruction. Thereby, the contradiction centre/periphery, far from being alleviated by the intensification of globalisation, is accentuated.

Yet, to all appearances, the so-called emerging countries (China, India, Brazil and others) have benefited from the globalisation of the 1990s and 2000s that enabled them to accelerate their growth pace. It is those appearances that made us say – hastily – that the conflict centre/periphery is for them almost extinct (“they are catching up” in and through capitalist globalisation).

The issue is to know why it has been so and whether the pursuit of this evolution is sustainable. Capitalism has entered into a long structural crisis since the 1970s: growth rates in the countries of the Triad declined to half the levels of the “Glorious Thirty” (1945-1975) and have never returned to those levels since then. Capital reacted to this crisis with centralisation and financialisation, which are non-dissociable: the flight into finance has been the sole means for oligopolies to find a market for their increasing surpluses. Liberal globalisation crowned it all. The success of this response has created the conditions for a marked blooming from 1990 to 2008 (which I qualified as “*Belle Epoque*”). The emerging countries’ strategies of growth acceleration through prioritisation of their exports coincided with that era, which ensured their immediate success.

The pursuit of this globalised capitalist option is unsustainable for many reasons. The main one is that it will not be possible, through this option, to absorb the gigantic mass of peasantries (nearly half humanity still, located almost entirely in the three continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America) in the development of modern industries and services. The historical capitalist way, based on private ownership of agrarian soil and its reduction to the status of merchandise was possible only for Europe, thanks to the massive emigration permitted by the conquest of the Americas (the “Europeans” accounted for 18% of the world population in 1500; in 1900, Europeans from Europe and migrants outside of Europe represented 36%). The people of Asia and Africa, who have no such opportunity, cannot follow the same development path. In other

words, while historical capitalism did solve the agrarian issue for Europe, it remains unable to do so in the peripheries.

Those among the countries of the South who would persist on this path and accept to “adjust” on a day-to-day basis to conditions that would be increasingly severe with the deepening of the crisis, will find themselves having failed to build a “national capitalism” capable of dealing on equal terms with the collective imperialism of the Triad. Instead, they are likely to be in a situation of countries ravaged by a *lumpen* capitalism - vulnerable and thereby dominated. Imperialist powers only see in these countries “emerging markets” whose development will necessarily fall within this deplorable perspective. But the countries concerned see themselves as “emerging nations”. The difference is significant.

The nations in the South, therefore, must lose their illusions relating to the “accelerated development in and through globalisation”. The increasing difficulties of adjustment already promote fights among the victims – peasants for land, workers for better wages, peoples for the conquest of democratic rights. In order to meet the challenge, the powers will have to refocus their development on the domestic market (an initiative taken by China as from 2002). This new self-centred development path – unavoidable – will certainly remain difficult. It must associate complementary but also conflicting means: the recourse to the “market” (which, in the modern world, is always a “capitalist” market) and to social planning (as non-bureaucratic as possible, paving the way, as much as possible, to the active intervention of popular classes).

The conflict between the collective imperialism of the Triad and the nations of the South is to intensify around issues relating to access to world services, technologies, and the globalised financial market. Imperialism is aware that the monopolies that ensure its rent are fragile and the countries in the South can annihilate their power. That is why its sole response consists in the deployment of the project of military control of the Planet by the armed forces of the United States and their subordinated allies in NATO. Nonetheless, I submit

here that within a few decades (not years!) the South will succeed in annihilating the power of the monopolies of the North. The South is already equipped to develop technologies by its own means. It can recuperate the control of its natural resources. The control of imperialist oligopolies over the globalised financial market is already breaking down and will be replaced, undoubtedly, by “regional arrangements” which will reinforce the margin of autonomy of the peripheries in that respect.

What will the world be “after the depression”? Impossible to tell. Let us not forget that the first long depression which started in the 1870s, and to which the capital of that time had responded also with monopolisation, (colonial) globalisation and financialisation, had led – after the short boom of the first “*Belle Epoque*” of 1894 to 1914, to 1914-1945, i.e., World War I, the Russian revolution, the 1929 crisis, Nazism, World War II and the Chinese Revolution. It is those “events” – not easily describable as minor – that shaped the “post crisis” world, that is, the combination during the Glorious Thirty of social-democracy in the West, the really existing socialisms in the East, and the popular nationalisms of the Bandung era (1955-1980) in the South. The second crisis will call for transformations of equal scope (even if they will be “different”). The conflict between the centre and the periphery, on the one hand and that between capitalism and a perspective beyond that, on the other, are non-dissociable.

Will the conflict centre/periphery mobilise all the Southern countries? This was the case in the Bandung era, despite the huge differences between the Southern countries of the time, not less marked today. But this possibility is not certain. The emerging countries – the real periphery of contemporary capitalism – could nurture the illusion that they can, like the imperialist countries, even if it is in acute competition with them, benefit from the plundering of the resources of the devastated peripheries (a reality that was repeated in history) which are thereby particularly powerless.

What should be understood is that there is no room for an “acceptable global alternative consensus” as Stiglitz and others

suggest (see my critiques of those projects on the *Pambazuka* website). Therefore, the South must first take independent initiatives in order to change in its favour the balances of forces, thus compelling the centre to later negotiate an acceptable consensus.

Africa, a particularly vulnerable region in globalisation in crisis

Africa had been plunged in the dark night of colonisation, a brutal form of globalisation imposed by the capitalism of the monopolies in response to its first great depression in the late 19th century, taking over from the slave trade, itself at the root of its historical regression, as Walter Rodney showed. The national liberation movements, which finally succeeded in imposing the independence of the continent's states, then conceived a big project of African Renaissance: an ambitious project as was required, associating accelerated development, both agricultural and industrial, from the universalisation of education to the construction of regional integrations falling within a pan-African perspective.

The historical blocks built by the National Liberation Movements imposed this perspective, equal to the challenge. And the radical intelligentsia, in conceptualising and implementing this project, had been able to respond to the requirements of the challenge, thinks with audacity and thinks by itself. During the 1960s and 1970s, Africa thereby made giant progress, to the extent that the new image of the continent made us forget the image of desolation inherited from colonisation.

But this social progress was gradually bogged down under the combined effect of the internal contradictions whose emergence it developed, and the hostility of imperialism. The peasantries have been gradually marginalised in the historical blocks in power, to the benefit of the ruling classes – and sometimes new middle classes – whose desire is to become the absolute masters of local power, thereby having to make the degenerate forms of the State fulfil the functions of a comprador State.

A major constraint to the first achievements of independent Africa is at the origin of this drift. This has to do with the insignificance

of the results in the unavoidable industrialisation, stemming from the illusions that foreign capital was able to help resolve the issue of its financing. On the other hand, one has to understand that industrialisation in Africa, as part of the South, cannot restrict itself to “reproducing” patterns of historical capitalism. Industrialisation here has to be associated with the guaranteeing of access to land for peasantries, and not with their accelerated expropriation. “Inventing” new patterns of industrialisation is a complex problem, which cannot be reduced to some blueprints. That process is necessarily not easy; it associates ingredients of “copying” with tasks related to “doing something new”.

These failures have created the conditions that enabled imperialism to resume the offensive in view of the recolonisation of Africa during the 1980s/90s, through the structural adjustment programmes, privatisation, the destruction of States, and their submission to the diktats of “aid donor clubs”, accompanied by the insipid discourses in fashion on “poverty”, “good governance” and “civil society”.

The tragedy is that African intellectuals on the whole were duped by these discourses, which presented the big project of African Renaissance as a “grandiloquent, nationalist and unrealistic” drift. Of course, one forgets to say that the countries that became “emerging” are precisely those that progressed in industrialisation in double time.

Africa today is then bound to no longer have ambition beyond its adjustment on a day-to-day basis to the requirements of the pursuit of the expansion of the capitalism of oligopolies; a way, which we said, could only lead to absolute disaster. In this perspective, Africa only exists for the natural resources it offers to plunder: the resources of its subsoil (hydrocarbons, gold, diamonds and even more important, rare minerals), her lands now offered to the expansion of agribusiness for new export productions (agro-fuels and others).

Our project is to bring together a critical mass of intellectuals capable, beyond the analysis of the disastrous politics underway, of outlining an authentic renaissance of thinking that is audacious, independent and up to the challenge.

Vote of Thanks to Samir Amin

For Courage and Consistency By Adolf Mkenda

*Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Rwekaza Mukandala,
Prof. Samir Amin, Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer, 2010,
Prof. Issa Shivji, Mwalimu Nyerere Professor of Pan-African Studies,
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
Comrades,*

I have the brief but most honourable task of thanking Prof. Samir Amin for his brilliant, courageous and eloquently delivered Nyerere Lecture for 2010. Above all, I wish to salute Prof. Samir Amin for his productive, audacious and consistent intellectual life. He remained steadfast in his analysis of capitalism and his conclusion that socialism is the inevitable form of human civilization, even as socialism as practiced in the Soviet Union and other countries was crumbling and capitalism seemed to have finally triumphed.

When the Berlin Wall collapsed, Francis Fukuyama declared that we had come to the end of history. In that he meant that capitalism and liberal democracy had been proved to be the highest and final stage of social organization and governance. The triumphalism of capitalism then shook the left to the core, forcing some to even re-evaluate and re-construct their analyses. Mwalimu Nyerere once remarked that even though he continued to believe in socialism it was foolhardy to talk about it. People would think you were crazy! Indeed in Tanzania, the Arusha Declaration was hastily and silently given the final burial. Universities' curricula were hastily reviewed to delete references to Marxism and Marxian political economy. Deng Xiao Ping declared that it was glorious to be rich, and that capitalism created wealth.

Countries in the South and particularly in Africa were goaded into neo-liberalism. And most scholars could not muster the courage to even point out and protest the obvious and indeed elementary contradictions in neo-liberal ideology.

For example, neo-liberalism argues for liberalisation which includes free movement of the factors of production. And thus the South was pushed into allowing for the free movement of capital. But the North, in contrast, was putting even more restrictions on the movement of labour, which in neo-classical economics, is one of the factors of production.

Another contradiction of neo-liberalism relates to the impossibility of sustaining the ideal liberal democracy in the face of growing income inequality. Liberal democracy presumes equality of men in shaping and managing the power of the State. But ultimately, individual wealth counts more in controlling state power than the ballot. The growing inequality under neo-liberalism therefore undermines in a very profound way, the very essence of liberal democracy. And yet, under the triumphalism of capitalism, this elementary contradiction is ignored.

Under the interpretation of neo-liberalism, the rich are hard workers and the poor are just sloths, and any government effort to assist the poor would merely increase the incentive for laziness. Market forces must be left to sort out and allocate rewards and punishments. The recent financial crisis has exposed the folly of this thinking, for we have seen that while profits are private matters, losses of large companies are the responsibility of the society at large.

In fact, as Prof. Samir Amin pointed out in his lecture, the very resurgence of economic crises should remind us that we have not come to the end of history after all. The quest for searching for a better social organisation must continue.

Professor Samir Amin never ignored the fact that capitalism is founded on accumulation through dispossession. The ultimate form of human civilisation cannot rest on such an unethical, even barbaric foundation. There ought to be a better foundation of human civilisation. We may not agree on what the alternative to capitalism should be, but surely we have empirical and historical facts to attest to the unethical foundation and sustenance of capitalism. As intellectuals we must choose whether we shall celebrate a civilisation of such flawed essence or search for a better alternative.

Prof. Samir Amin eloquently argues that socialism is the ultimate form of human civilisation. It takes some courage to take this position. As you know, in the USA, socialism is the name you give a dog to justify hanging it. Any retreat from neo-liberalism, however marginal, is branded socialist, which makes it unpopular. For, we must also admit that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and given the experience garnered in these experiments, socialism is a hard sell.

Yet it is refreshing to listen to Prof. Samir Amin because he was and remains consistent in spite of the upheavals that befell socialist governments and their subsequent demise. Such courage can only impel us to the task of deepening our understanding of the world in order to change it for the better. As intellectuals, we must in particular confront two tasks in relation to the issue of socialism:

- First, we must deepen our understanding of the historical evolution of human civilisation to establish the extent to which socialism is indeed the natural destiny of human civilisation and to determine the material conditions necessary for such evolution. In this connection, we need to determine the role that individual agency, and in particular intellectual effort, can play in this otherwise natural progression. This task is ever more important to avert a wasteful quest for a utopian society.
- Second, we must evaluate what happened in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and determine the historical significance and lessons of these experiments in building socialism.

These are some of the things that we, as intellectuals, confront and must deal with. But even these tasks require the kind of intellectual commitment which may entail personal sacrifices. Prof. Samir Amin's committed intellectual life offers us the kind of inspiration that we need. His life reminds us that our task as intellectuals is to understand and explain the world and change it for the better.

Prof. Samir Amin, thank you for your eloquently delivered lecture. And thank you for your exemplary intellectual life.

Bereket Habte Selassie

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Distinguished Lecturer, 2011

From Colonial Borders to African Unity

Citation for Professor Bereket Habte Selassie

Read By Professor Issa Shivji

Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, Ambassador Fulgence Kazaura, Vice-Chancellor Professor Rwekaza Mukandala, our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer-designate Professor Bereket Selassie, distinguished academics, ladies and gentlemen.

I join the Vice-Chancellor in welcoming you all to the Third Julius Nyerere Intellectual Festival. The Third Festival is special because it coincides with the 50th independence anniversary of many African countries, including our own. It is also special because it coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the University of Dar es Salaam, which started its intellectual journey a couple of months before our independence in December 1961. Happily, these two anniversaries also coincide with the end of the first triennium of the Mwalimu Nyerere Professor Chair, or Kigoda Cha Mwalimu, as it is popularly known. The programme of the Festival reflects all these three and much more. It is our hope that you will attend and fully participate as we reflect on the vision, thoughts, hopes and fears of the first generation nationalists. What have we done with our independence? Where is uhuru? And where are we going? To help us reflect on these themes we have with us some veteran nationalists such as Mzee Martin Shikuku, who has come all the way from Kitale. Karibu sana Mzee. We have Mzee Hashim Mbita and Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, both of whom have been closely involved in the struggle for the liberation of the continent. Karibuni.

As we question our nationalist elders and our subsequent state leaders as to whether they have really walked the path of Pan-Africanism or squandered our independence in their own personal, class or clan interests, we should also reflect on what we, who pride ourselves as intellectuals, have done to further the cause of Pan-

Africanism. Criticism and self-criticism, critical evaluation and sober reflection, will hopefully guide our debates, discussions, and deliberations. In-depth analysis and mature politics in the best interest of our people has been the hallmark of the tradition of this University, which we fondly call ‘the Hill’. I have no doubt that we will continue to nurture that tradition.

Now let me turn to the task at hand – to introduce to you our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer-designate.

Our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer this year has the unique distinction of having witnessed the All Africa People’s Conferences organised by Kwame Nkrumah in the late 1950s. The conferences were the epitome of Pan-Africanism. African independence was around the corner. Delegates were fervently discussing and dedicating themselves to the next stage – African unity. Professor Selassie recalls the mood in his book significantly titled *The Crown and the Pen*.

The conference created such enthusiasm, that to many the millennium seemed to be around the corner. The songs, the drumming, the dances and demonstrations, the speeches, the resolutions and slogans reflected this spirit of optimism. The moving spirit of this new African awakening was President Nkrumah whom the Conference saluted and many made a commitment to emulate. We all left enthused and with a firm commitment to work for the cause that was the theme of the Conference – African liberation and African Unity. (p. 178)

It was indeed a great African awakening. At the time there were only eight independent African states. Five years later, when African leaders met in Addis Ababa to discuss African unity, there were 32. Professor Selassie was present as the young Attorney General of ‘His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I, Elect of God, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, King of Kings, Defender of the Faith ...’ (his words not mine). So our Nyerere Lecturer had the dubious “distinction” of being ruled by a lion! But he refused it. In 1964 Bereket Selassie did the undoable by the king’s subject – he resigned. But meanwhile he had engaged in an underground movement against the emperor and

had contacts with the liberation movement in Eritrea. By resigning, he formally dissociated himself from the Crown and took to the Pen, if I may paraphrase the title of his memoirs, *The Crown and the Pen*. He became a researcher, an academic, and a Professor. He has written prose and poetry and plays. He has crafted legal documents and examined and supervised many students including this young man standing before you! But Professor Selassie took the old adage of Marx seriously: hitherto philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it. Indeed the point is to change it. So Professor Selassie not only used his pen to teach and write but also to propagate the cause of freedom, justice and liberation of the continent.

The sub-title of his book sums up well the kind of lawyer that our Distinguished Lecturer is – ‘the lawyer turned rebel’ – meaning in simple terms disloyal to law. Lawyers serve the status quo; rebels overturn it. And that is what Bereket Habte Selassie has used his pen for – to turn the oppressive status quo into a liberating one. And in the cause of liberation he has not held back. When the cause demanded, he fled the emperor’s Ethiopia. When the cause cried out, he joined the Eritrean liberation movement: first as a mediator between the fighting factions, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and then Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF); then as a coordinator of relief work for Eritrea and finally as a diplomatic representative of EPLF. When Eritrea finally won its independence and wished to chart a new course, he deployed his legal talents and skills as a constitutional lawyer to head the Constitutional Commission. His Commission produced a fine Constitution, never to be implemented. The former guerillas had tasted power and they wanted absolute power – and absolute power corrupts absolutely. They shelved the Constitution. It is gathering dust. Meanwhile Professor Bereket Selassie finds himself persona non-grata in his own country – but not on your continent. Bereket, you are very welcome to this part of the continent called Tanzania and we are pleased to honour you for, in you, we see the spirit of Pan-Africanist liberation.

Comrades, and friends, I am pleased to present to you our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer, 2011, Professor Bereket Habte Selassie.

Introductory Remarks

It is a great honour to be invited by the University of Dar es Salaam to deliver the 2011 Distinguished Nyerere Lecture; and a great pleasure to be welcomed here by Professor Issa Shivji. A scholar of integrity, and a Pan-Africanist, Issa Shivji is widely admired for keeping the faith where many others have faltered. Our paths have crossed as academics and Pan-Africanist activists a few times before, and today we meet on this auspicious occasion celebrating Mwalimu Nyerere's birth.

We all know that Africa has been a victim of European colonial history at several levels. One of those is that, in imposing artificially created nation states in utter disregard of the interests of Africans, the Europeans inflicted the wounds of their own history on Africans. A prime example of the wound is the African nation state, defined by artificially fixed boundaries cutting across ethnic lines and, in some cases, family lines. The wound is a major part of our historical reality that requires healing. Hence the need to think beyond colonial borders, and adopt Pan-Africanism in the quest for healing and human betterment. Hence also the need to consider the matter in a historical perspective with respect to Pan-Africanism, and its adventures in the post-colonial era.

My lecture today is titled Post-colonial Pan-Africanism: A Historical and Biographical Testament.

From Colonial Borders to African Unity I

Post-colonial Pan-Africanism A Historical and Biographical Testament

I was privileged to have been present at some crucial moments in modern African history - moments in which some important decisions were made by African leaders; moments also marked by failure in terms of moving our continent toward unity. Was the failure one of leadership, or are there insurmountable, structural reasons to explain the failure? We need to keep confronting this millennial question of Africa until we find a satisfactory answer. One aim of these lectures is an attempt to keep the fire of the debate burning and thus help advance Africa's march towards unity. To that end we need to look back to the origin and evolution of Pan-Africanism and examine the reasons for our failure.

Concerning our failure, I cannot help thinking of a crude analogy, an analogy at the individual level. I am thinking of the failure of nerve, of Africa losing her nerve in the face of historic challenges to the future of her peoples. It is indeed one way of characterizing our failure to create a United States of Africa, as Nkrumah for one had demanded, right up to, and on the occasion of the founding conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963.

Speaking of nerves, I am reminded of a phrase that Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser used repeatedly as a kind of refrain in his speech during the opening session of the founding conference of the OAU. What Africa needed, Nasser said, was a leadership with an organizing mind and dynamic nerves. Could he have been thinking of a Napoleonic figure imposing his will on the continent with the aim of continental unity? If so, was this feasible? To those who were impatient to create a continental unity, this might have appeared as an attractive vision; but it is the vision of a dreamer. A similar vision was expressed

by Nkrumah in so many words, first in his book, “Africa Must Unite,” then repeatedly in speeches, including his moving address at the OAU’s founding conference. I will say more on this and on the issue of leadership concerning Africa’s bumpy road to unity.

Origin of the Pan-African Idea

Among the ideas invoked to advance the cause of justice and self-determination during the long struggle of the twentieth century, Pan-Africanism holds a special place for Africans both in the continent and in the Diaspora. The origin of the idea of Pan-Africanism is rooted in crisis: in the tragic history of suffering of African peoples worldwide. It spans the plight of Africans under the oppressive European colonial rule, and the historic crime of the transatlantic slave trade with its consequent treatment of African people as chattel in the Americas and the Caribbean region. European inhumanity was also practiced on Africans in the continent who suffered harsh treatment under the yoke of colonial rule until after the end of the Second World War. In the United States of America, long after the suppression of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery in 1865, Africans (who were given the name Negroes) were still denied civic and political rights. Far from attaining equal rights, they were forced to live segregated lives, deprived of the economic and social opportunities enjoyed by Whites. So their struggle for justice and equal rights continued, at times taking the form of violent outbursts. The same was true for the large African Diaspora communities in the Caribbean region and in many parts of South America, including Brazil. Both in the continental United States and the Caribbean region, people of African descent faced an unchanged reality of oppression and racial discrimination well into the middle of the twentieth century. In the face of that reality individuals and groups arose from time to time to protest and demand change.

In the United States of America, where the largest number of Diaspora Africans lived, African Americans continually waged the struggle for democratic equality and justice for decades against heavy odds. In this fight, there have been many heroes, but one person stands out as the embodiment of unrelenting struggle, eventually also

espousing the Pan-Africanist idea. Indeed, he was the first to coin the word Pan-Africanism. That man is William Edward Burkhardt Dubois, or simply W.E.B Dubois as he is generally called. Dubois' methodology of struggle was based on the belief that knowledge is a liberating weapon and that educated African Americans must use their intellect and analysis of their reality in combating racism and demanding equality and justice. He also used Pan-Africanism as a mobilizing idea calling on the oppressed race to be united. Dubois was a founding member and leading light of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As such, in all his work he anticipated the civil rights movement and the emergence of its leader, Martin Luther King.

There were other Diaspora Africans who sounded the clarion call for united struggle, like Marcus Garvey, who used a different approach. Whereas Dubois relied on the mastery of knowledge and analysis, Garvey relied on popular mobilization. His "Back to Africa" movement had tremendous mass appeal; and he used it to create a large following. Unfortunately, his movement was cut short of its aim by his prosecution for fraud and subsequent imprisonment; and he died a broken man in 1940. However, his movement had contributed to the spread of the idea of Pan-Africanism. Among those who encountered and were impressed by Garvey and his idea was Kwame Nkrumah, who was destined to carry the torch of the Pan-Africanist idea and attempt to apply it in the call for African unity. Apart from W.E.B. Dubois and Garvey, two other Diaspora Africans had also a lasting influence on Nkrumah: George Padmore and C.L.R. James.

George Padmore's influence on Nkrumah and his contribution to Pan-Africanism is particularly noteworthy - Nkrumah depended on him for advice on many issues. Indeed he is considered by some as Nkrumah's mentor on Pan-Africanism; he certainly helped him in organizing important meetings including the All African Peoples Conference of 1958-1959 as well as the preceding meeting of the African Heads of State and Government in the spring of 1958. A clear evidence of Padmore's contribution to Pan-Africanism and Nkrumah's indebtedness to him is indicated by the fact that when he died and was cremated in London in 1959, Nkrumah requested

for his remains to be sent to Ghana. His remains were interred at Christianborg Castle in Accra. On that occasion, Nkrumah told the Ghana Radio Service, "One day, the whole of Africa will surely be free and united and when the final tale is told, the significance of George Padmore's work will be revealed."

George Padmore was a prolific writer and speaker who authored many books. He is best known by his last book, *Pan-Africanism or Communism* (1956). Incidentally, W.E.B. Dubois' remains are also interred in Ghana, where he had spent his last years as a Ghanaian citizen, until his death at age 95.

C.L.R. James, who was a boyhood friend of George Padmore, was responsible for introducing him to Nkrumah, a crucial act that led to the friendship and historic collaboration of the two. By that time preparations were under way to organize the 5th Pan-African Congress, which was held in Manchester in 1945 with Nkrumah and Padmore among many leaders participating. At that historic Congress, it was resolved to mobilize and organize the African masses for independence; and for the first time the organizing slogan became, "Independence Now!"; a slogan which Nkrumah was to use soon after in his own country. Before I consider Nkrumah's historic mission, let me mention the role of African leaders in France's colonial empire.

Négritude and the French Pan-African Connection

During the inter-war period (1919-1939), while Africans in the English speaking world were exploring Pan-Africanist ideas and organizing movements aimed at its realization, other Africans in the French colonial empire were engaged in a similar liberationist enterprise. The members of one such group, who were students in Paris, decided to call their movement *Négritude*. These men were: the Martinican Aimé Césaire, the Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor, and the (French) Guianese Léon Damas. All three were poets as well as politicians with socialist ideological leanings. Indeed some of them like Césaire (and George Padmore) had been members of the communist party at one time. But, unlike W.E.B. Dubois who joined the communist party toward the end of his life, Césaire and Padmore had left it disenchanted, preferring the pursuit of the Pan-Africanist ideal epitomized in the concept of *Négritude*.

What is Négritude?

The concept of Négritude is supposed to represent both political and cultural elements of the African world. The founders of the movement conceived of it as a weapon of resistance in response to their experience of racial prejudice and discrimination in the Métropole, as well as colonial oppression back home in the colonies. In political terms the effect of Négritude was to inspire pride among Africans and thus prepare them for the coming struggle for Africa's liberation. At a social and cultural level, Négritude boldly asserts and celebrates blackness in the face of European (white) belief of superiority and racial discrimination based on such belief. The group founded a literary review, *L'étudiant Noire* (The Black Student), which acted as the forerunner of the Négritude movement. The review continued appearing until the start of the Second World War in 1939, which marked the first phase of the Négritude Movement. Senghor enlisted in the French armed forces as a *tirailleur* (gunner) together with other Senegalese soldiers, and was captured by the Germans. Césaire and Damas went back to their respective countries.

After the war, all three were involved in politics and were elected to the French National Assembly. Eventually Senghor would become the first President of Senegal, while Césaire became the mayor of his native Martinique's capital city, Fort-de-France, which was tantamount to being a head of state in the island nation. More importantly, before that he taught at the *Lycée* (High School). I say more importantly because Franz Fanon was one of his students. It is no wonder that Fanon was drawn to the cause of African liberation and got involved in Algeria's armed struggle. Césaire also started the *Review Tropiques*, which spread its influence throughout the French Caribbean region influencing people like Franz Fanon, René Depestre, Edouard Glissant, and Georges Desportes. Of these four Afro-Caribbean intellectuals, Franz Fanon was destined to attain wider fame by virtue of his involvement in the Algerian revolution and his writings, especially *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Face White Mask*. He also happens to be the one I met at the All Africa Peoples Conference in Accra in January 1959, as I will explain.

Fortunately for the Pan-Africanist idea in the French-speaking African Diaspora, the void Senghor and Césaire left during the war was filled by others, preeminently the Senegalese intellectual Alioune Diop. Diop was the principal founder of *Présence Africaine*, with the assistance of Paul N'Goma and Guy Tirolien (both from Guadeloupe), the Ivorian Bernard Dadié, the two men from Benin, Apithy and Behanza, and the Malagasi Rabemananjato. *Présence Africaine's* role in the propagation of Pan-Africanism and Africa's liberation is one of the legacies of *Négritude* and its founders. But out of what I would like to call the founding fathers of Pan-Africanism, the torchbearer and impassioned apostle was clearly Kwame Nkrumah.

Nkrumah and African Unity

When I saw Nkrumah for the first time, I was entering law school in London, and he had just come from Accra to present his plea for Ghana's independence to the British government. I met him at a seminar organized by the West African Students Union (WASU) of which he had once been vice president. From the speech he delivered at that meeting and his remarks during the Q and A, I could see that he was dedicated to Pan-Africanism and the need for Africans to unite. Earlier (in 1947), while living in London, he had received an invitation to serve as the General Secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), a new political organization led by Dr. Joseph Danquah. With the fervent insistence of George Padmore, Nkrumah accepted the invitation and sailed back to Ghana, then known as the Gold Coast.

Nkrumah found the pace of progress toward Ghana's independence too sluggish and the policy and politics of UGCC not to his liking; so he broke away from Dr. Danquah's party and created a new party, the Convention People's Party (CPP). Within ten years of his return, Nkrumah and his CPP led Ghana to full independence, thus becoming the first sub-Saharan African country to be free from colonial rule and to herald the dawn of a new era in Africa.

As he tirelessly pursued the goal of African liberation, Nkrumah boldly demanded the unity of the laboring masses. His advocacy of the twin goals of unity and liberation was first formally presented

at the official state level during the conference of the heads of state and government that he convened in the spring of 1958. Much to his dismay, he drew a blank at that conference. Apart from Guinea's Sékou Touré, there was no support from government leaders for his idea of African unity, beyond perfunctory rhetorical statements by some of them. From this he drew the necessary conclusion that what was required was a strategy of mass support from leaders of liberation movements and civic societies. That was how, with the active support and assistance of George Padmore, he convened the All African Peoples Conference of December 1958-January 1959.

From a Government-based to a People-based Conference

One of the senior African leaders whom Nkrumah invited to take part in the 1958 conference of African heads of state and government was Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie. The Emperor, who had not quite caught on to the idea of Pan-Africanism, sent his youngest son, Prince Sahle Selassie to represent him. The son was of my generation and had been a student in England at the same time as me, though we were not on speaking terms. The prince did not speak a word at the conference, to the annoyance and dismay of Nkrumah, who concluded that Emperor Haile Selassie had instructed his son not to speak. Nkrumah was a 25-year old student in the United States when Haile Selassie became a world-renowned figure at the time Fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935. The Emperor attained world fame after he appeared before the League of Nations in Geneva in 1936 to plead his country's cause. Like all African students in the Diaspora, Nkrumah had been shocked by Italy's aggression on an African state—one of the two independent African states. In fact Haile Selassie had become a symbol of African victimhood and a rallying figure for Africans. Hence Nkrumah's expectation that he would support the idea of African unity envisaged in the conference; and his disappointment when he did not accept the invitation to attend the conference. This was to be Nkrumah's first challenge in his pursuit of African unity, followed by the lukewarm response of those who attended the conference. He was thus determined to bypass official Africa and concentrate instead

on the African masses, perhaps taking a leaf out of Marcus Garvey's approach of mass appeal.

In much of Africa, Nkrumah's appeal was being felt among the young educated circles and even among some of the organized masses like trade unions. This appeal began to be felt even in Ethiopia following the 1960 attempted military coup, when scores of African university students had come to study in Ethiopia under a scholarship scheme established by the Emperor. The process of the decolonization of Africa, starting with the independence of Ghana, played an important role in the political awakening of Ethiopian university students. Apart from establishing the scholarship, the Emperor's government was taking initiatives in inviting leaders of African labor and liberation movements, presumably in response to the challenge Nkrumah was posing as a premier African leader sidelining the Emperor. I had become a good friend with some of these leaders including Tom Mboya of Kenya and Félix Moumie of Cameroun. These and other African leaders, like Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda, enriched the political experience of young Ethiopians.

These developments reinforced the Pan-African connection in Ethiopia, which contributed toward an awareness of Ethiopians of their Africanity. An example of the development of such awareness among Ethiopian students was the song *Africa Ahgurachin* (Africa our Mother Continent), a student continental anthem that marked a break with the past insularity of Ethiopians. In this respect, a group of my friends and I played a modest role in helping facilitate meetings of visiting African leaders with members of the Ethiopian elite, including some key officials who were sympathetic to the idea of Ethiopian involvement in African affairs. It was partly as a function of my involvement in some of these initiatives that I was appointed a delegate to the All African Peoples Conference convened by Nkrumah.

The All African Peoples Conference

At the time when the All African Peoples Conference was held in Accra in late December 1958 (continuing to January 1959), the majority of African countries were still under colonial rule. There

were only eight independent countries. As already mentioned, the spring 1958 meeting was convened for African heads of state and government. The December meeting was of political parties, liberation movements, labor unions, women's organizations and student and youth organizations. These came from all over Africa, from Algeria in the north to southern Africa, and from Zanzibar in the east to Gambia in West Africa. Franz Fanon led the Algerian delegation. We held discussions on many occasions with the Algerian delegation because we stayed in the same hotel. I also happen to speak French which made it easier to deal with the North Africans, including the Tunisians. Among the issues we discussed, at times arguing until the wee hours, was the North/South (or Arab/Black) relations in Africa, with Fanon taking a classic Marxist/internationalist view, arguing that it should prevail over differences based on race, color or ethnicity.

This issue did not figure in any shape or form at the conference. Nkrumah's perspective which leaned toward a Marxist view seemed to confirm him in the position taken by Fanon. In this, his friendship with C.L.R. James and George Padmore with their Marxist background probably influenced his position. Aside from ideology, the Algerians were idolized by the conference participants because the FLN and the Algerian revolution were known and admired throughout Africa. When Franz Fanon climbed the platform and stood at the speaker's podium, the conference gave him a standing ovation; and that was long before he became famous as author of *The Wretched of the Earth*. No head of a delegation was given a better reception by the conference participants.

The conference was presided over by Nkrumah, who used his pulpit to preach the "gospel" of Pan-Africanism. Looking back, it is hard to recapture the spirit of the moment. The sense of optimism about Africa's future was palpable at that historic conference. And Nkrumah personified that spirit. His strategy was to mobilize the political and social forces of the African continent and set them to work for African liberation and eventual unity. And he was willing to put the resources of his own country at the service of that goal. Indeed he established centers for training cadres for the task. But there were several challenges facing his noble goal.

To begin with, the leaders of the independent states were ensconced in their newfound power structure and were not willing to relinquish their sovereignty for the sake of a yet unfulfilled larger unity transcending national borders. Moreover, the leaders of Africa were divided ideologically. The Cold War had turned Africa into an ideological battleground. Some of the independent African states were aligned on the side of the West led by the United States, while others were sympathetic to the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union. Would a “people’s conference” overcome these obstacles? Or, would the leaders of the popular forces follow the example of the few independent states and become entrapped by their own national power and become unwilling to relinquish it for any higher cause?

There were also other challenges. Even as Nkrumah was planning his strategy to achieve African unity, in the early 1960s, external forces were busy plotting to undermine his efforts. The continent was susceptible to manipulation, becoming easy victim to ideological division, which was crystallized into two camps known as the Monrovia group and the Casablanca group, named after the cities where they held the meeting at which they declared their respective positions. The Monrovia group, which was inclined toward the west, included countries like Ethiopia, Liberia and Nigeria. The Casablanca group included states like Egypt, Ghana and Guinea, and the members either leaned toward the socialist camp or insisted on neutrality. Another axis of division was the Anglophone and Francophone dichotomy with the former French colonies, except Guinea, closely linked to France.

The ideological struggle was also manifest in attempts by the two sides of the Cold War to infiltrate or influence social and political movements in the continent, especially students and labor unions. These attempts negatively affected the struggle for African liberation and unity. In the East-West contention the financial and other material resources made available from the West far outweighed those coming from the socialist camp. The appearance of the Non-Aligned Movement after the Bandung meeting seemed to present a third way by reinforcing and providing support for the hard-won political sovereignty of former colonial territories that were nevertheless economically dependent on their former colonizers and the United States of America.

The Seductive Power of Nationalism

The struggle between the socialist East and the capitalist West waged for the “hearts and minds” of Africans considered African nationalism as a principal object of interest. The members of the capitalist West were more familiar with it and thus more adept at how to deal with it, particularly given their superior resources. The socialist East sought to substitute nationalism with socialist internationalism, but was clumsy in their method. In any case the attempts were complicated by the appearance of an African variety of socialism in several African states such as Senegal and Tanzania.

It is important to remember the historical context in which such ideological contention was playing out in Africa. African countries inherited from colonial rule artificially fixed boundaries enclosing within them different ethno-linguistic groups. In those circumstances nation building became the primary post-colonial political objective. There is a cruel historical irony in the fact that a sense of nationhood defined by foreign imposed artificial boundaries prevailed over primordial loyalties based on ethnic origin. To understand this historical irony, it is necessary to know the impact of colonial rule in all its aspects. The sentiment of outraged dignity suffered by Africans during colonial rule, their thirst for freedom and their common struggle to attain that freedom acts as a matrix for the birth of African nationalism transcending ethnic loyalties, which became the ideology that the leaders used to forge a common national destiny. This the socialist camp utterly misunderstood, even though it had started to adapt its methods in later years; but by that time the Soviet Union was approaching its last days. It remains to be seen whether the Chinese have learned a lesson from the mistakes of the Soviet Union in its dealing with Africa, as well as what lessons Africa has learned.

Evidently Nkrumah also underestimated the power of nationalism and its historical and psychological source in each of the former colonial territories that became new nation-states on the basis of a history of common oppression within the artificially erected boundaries. Nkrumah's socialism is not of the African socialism variety; he was too much influenced by Marxism for that. His perspective of capitalism was informed by his Marxist readings. He

was convinced of capitalism's harmful effects on Africa and that a long struggle lay ahead to reverse or correct those effects. It was partly in terms of this belief that he thought that he could persuade his fellow African leaders to join him in the common cause of liberation; one that he believed required unity for its achievement. He argued that socialism was the system that would best serve Africa's needs in accommodating the changes brought about by capitalism. He called it scientific socialism, distinguishing it from the African socialism school advocated by others. In an essay with the title of "African Socialism Revisited," Nkrumah wrote:

We know that traditional African society was founded on principles of egalitarianism. In its actual workings, however, it had various shortcomings. Its humanist impulse, nevertheless, is something that continues to urge us towards our all-African socialist reconstruction. We postulate each man to be an end in himself, not merely a means; and we accept the necessity of guaranteeing each man equal opportunities for his development. The implications of this socio-political practice have to be worked out scientifically, and the necessary social and economic policies pursued with resolution. Any meaningful humanism must begin from egalitarianism and must lead to objectively chosen policies for safeguarding and sustaining egalitarianism. Hence, socialism. Hence, also, scientific socialism.

On the strength of this strongly-held socialist creed, Nkrumah sought to build Ghana and using it as a laboratory, spread it to the rest of Africa. Alas! It was cut short by his overthrow in February 1966, in a military coup inspired and directed by the CIA, while he was on a state visit to North Vietnam and China. Following the overthrow, in an act of Pan-African solidarity, President Sékou Touré of Guinea invited Nkrumah to become co-President of Guinea. It was a symbolic act of magnanimity that led to an interesting diplomatic incident and confusion at the next meeting of the OAU Summit where Ghanaian representatives of President Nkrumah showed up together with their Guinean comrades contesting the right of the delegation sent by the usurpers to be seated as legitimate delegates of Ghana.

Nkrumah and the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

Two years and nine months before his overthrow, Nkrumah participated in the founding conference of the OAU in May 1963. It would be the last time I saw him. One of the aims of the conference that led to the establishment of the OAU was to put to rest the division of the Monrovia and Casablanca groups by creating a continental body to speak with one voice on behalf of all Africans. Ever since the Accra conference of December 1958, I had watched with great interest the movement toward the establishment of a continental unifying body. And through my Ghanaian contacts I followed Nkrumah's attempts to convince his fellow heads of state and government to think big and create a United States of Africa. In this, his close friend and fellow socialist President Sékou Touré of Guinea as well as Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, joined him and other progressive Africans to end the Monrovia-Casablanca divide because it was a huge stumbling block to the aim of African unity. Sékou Touré played a crucial role in persuading Emperor Haile Selassie to convince members of the Monrovia group to agree on a compromise plan. To that end, the draft charter that would be submitted to the conference was agreed upon for Nigeria to work on a first draft and submit it to a working group who would then submit it to the head of state of the country hosting the conference. That person was Emperor Haile Selassie because it had been agreed that Ethiopia would host the meeting. Again, Sékou Touré played a key role in that decision as well.

I would be involved more directly in the process of review of the draft charter because Ethiopia was given the draft prepared by Nigeria. The Ethiopian government appointed a drafting committee to prepare a final compromise draft, and I became a member of the committee *ex officio* in my capacity as the Attorney General of Ethiopia. Our committee, chaired by Mr. Getachew Kibret of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked on the charter, which was submitted to the Founding Conference of the OAU on May 20, 1963. As a document representing a compromise, the charter was a far cry

from what Nkrumah would have wanted. But it was seen by most as a step in the right direction. Indeed, the fact that Africa could come up with a consensus document was a huge surprise, particularly to the international press, which had expected the conference to fail.

Pan-Africanism and Self Determination

I will end this lecture on Pan-Africanism by injecting the issue of national self-determination, which on the face of it seems to stand in opposition to Pan-Africanism. But it does not necessarily contradict Pan-Africanism; what it does is to make the subject more complex and challenging. Very simply put, all governments of all nations are required by internationally agreed norms, which are the outcome of the struggle for democratic progress, to guarantee “equal rights and self-determination” to all of their members—particularly in multi-ethnic nations. Failing that, according to those norms, they may face revolts seeking self-determination, including a demand for secession as the ultimate sanction.

I will illustrate the point by referring to an anecdote. It involves a question put to me from none other than Professor Issa Shivji. The question is related to my involvement in the struggle for Eritrea’s national self-determination, leading to independence. Issa wanted to know: how do I square this personal history and dedication to Eritrea’s independence with my Pan-Africanist ideal? It is a fair and logical question, and one that I was glad to answer in an interview Issa and I did two years ago. So, does national self-determination in the post-colonial African context contradict Pan-Africanism? How does one deal with Eritrea’s case? Where does it fit in the scheme of things? Incidentally, Eritrea’s perceived uniqueness has now been challenged by events in southern Sudan and the referendum of January 9, 2011, which resulted in the separation of the south from the northern part of Sudan and the creation of another new nation. Whether this will be followed by Somaliland being recognized remains to be seen. Logic and fairness, as well as the recent history of Somalia would seem to justify a positive answer.

In Eritrea's case, opponents of Eritrea's struggle for independence, influenced by Emperor Haile Selassie's diplomacy (powerfully backed by the United States), used to argue that recognizing Eritrea's case would open a "Pandora's Box" in African politics by inspiring other groups within African states to seek secession. To put the case in perspective, a brief historical background is necessary. The Eritrean case was grounded in legal and historical arguments in consonance with the African post-colonial rationale. According to that rationale, all former colonial territories defined by the colonially-fixed boundaries constitute the post-colonial nation-states. African leaders accepted the colonially-created legal order when they passed the Cairo Resolution at the OAU's second meeting in 1964. The Eritrean argument was that the application of that rationale should extend to the case of Eritrea because Eritrea is an entity created by the same colonial history as the rest of Africa. Before taking up arms in 1961, Eritreans had expected that their quest for self-determination would be recognized, and on the strength of that belief they tried peaceful means to exercise their legal right.

What is not generally known is that there was a convergence of interests between American strategic and geopolitical interest in the Red Sea region and Emperor Haile Selassie's expansionist ambition. This convergence of interest sealed Eritrea's fate; America used its influence in the United Nations to engineer a lopsided federal arrangement under which Eritrea would have a regional autonomy short of independence. Eritreans were forced to accept this arrangement. But even that arrangement did not satisfy Emperor Haile Selassie who proceeded to abolish the federation thus causing the armed struggle. After thirty years of bitter struggle, Eritreans achieved by force of arms what they could not achieve through diplomacy.

Many Ethiopians, including some of my friends who were democratic and anti-imperial in their thinking, had hoped that that Eritrean autonomy under the federal arrangement would become the basis for other regions in Ethiopia to gain a measure of autonomy and thus transform the empire eventually into a sort of a commonwealth of willing partners. What the current government of Ethiopia set out to do is an approximation of that vision. After the

overthrow of Mengistu's military regime, much hope was pinned on the promise by the new leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia to establish a progressive regional government system based on cooperative principles that would be a model for the rest of Africa. It proved to be a vain hope. Indeed, the two leaders not only failed to create regional cooperation, in 1998, the two countries fought a deadly war that took the lives of over 100,000 people and caused much devastation of property as well as the displacement of hundreds of thousands.

The conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, countries led by erstwhile allies and comrades-in-arms, seems to lend credence to the argument that each country needs to put its own house in order before thinking of unity with others. On the other hand, we need to hold Nkrumah's vision aloft and work towards its realization in various ways, perhaps through stages of regional grouping. In this respect the African Union will need to act more vigorously to prod regions and countries to create regional trade relations, and to work on the basis of shared core values as the foundation of future unity, a topic about which I will say more in tomorrow's lecture.

Before I give the brief concluding remarks, let me add a word on the role of women in Africa's struggle for unity and progress. Indeed it has been observed that African women have emerged with a new definition of Pan-Africanism that emphasizes the humanity of Africans over and above the independence of states. This is indeed a great challenge to Africa that has yet to be addressed. At the seventh Pan-African Congress in Kampala, the women who were present formed the Pan-African Women's Liberation Organization (PAWLO). In consequence of their redefinition of Pan-Africanism in humanistic terms, African women thus have spearheaded a movement opposed to warfare and violation of basic human rights. They have taken the discourse on Pan-Africanism to a different level revealing the distinction between rhetorical Pan-Africanism practiced by government leaders and that of ordinary people. In May 1999, a meeting of Pan-African Women in Zanzibar proposed a peace agenda, including far-reaching demands for an end to militarism and arms purchases and the need for peaceful resolution of the wars raging in Africa.

Conclusion

Nkrumah was not able to persuade his brethren to accept his proposed union of African states, but he will be remembered as a prophet of African liberation and unity. Pan-Africanism is still a distant goal, but the founding principles have been laid down and instilled in the minds of Africans. In this age of globalization, Africa still faces the old problems with new challenges, challenges that increasingly revealed the division between government leaders and ordinary people. How has the African Union (AU), successor of the OAU, addressed this challenge? I will examine the issues related to this topic in my second lecture.

From Colonial Borders to African Unity II

Pan-Africanism and Problems of African Nation-Statehood in the Age of Globalization: The Dialectic of the Universal and the Local

Let me begin with another simple anecdote, this time from a class that I teach at my University, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

It was at the end of a lecture I had given to my class on Problems of Policy and Politics of Africa in which I discussed Nkrumah's attempt to create a United States of Africa.

At the end of the lecture, having explained why Nkrumah failed to persuade his fellow African heads of state and government to accept the idea of a United States of Africa, I opened the class to the question and answer session. I had said that the principal reason was that these leaders had been ensconced in a state system forged during European colonial rule, systems over which they presided as Presidents or Prime Ministers, and that if Nkrumah's ideas were to prevail they would lose that status as Presidents or Prime Ministers, becoming instead, governors of their respective states. A bright African student, one of the three Africans in a class of seventy, asked me whether it would make a difference if they were to be appointed kings instead of governors. After all, the student seemed to hint: didn't Jean Bedel Bokassa change his status from President to Emperor?

The answer to this innocent but interesting question need not detain us here. The question simply reflects the desire of the current generation of young Africans to see Nkrumah's idea implemented. My hope is that it may be implemented during the lifetime of that young student if not in my own lifetime. Meanwhile, the post-colonial heritage of an Africa divided by artificially fixed boundaries

persists with the attendant problems caused by such division. Just as Nkrumah had warned, the fragmented postcolonial state system is politically divisive and economically wasteful. The tension between the Pan-Africanist idea and the fragmented state system is implicit in the compromise solution embedded in the OAU Charter, Article II of which advocates the promotion of solidarity and cooperation among African states as well as for the defense of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Haunted by the inherent tension, African leaders frequently make rhetorical statements referring to the dream of a united states of Africa even as they are wedded to preserving the present status quo. Those who express such rhetorical statements do so principally in order to appear that they are in sympathy with the dreams of the members of the public who are in favor of African unity. Lately, we see a hint of an incremental change for the better in African thinking at the continental level.

As if an angel whispered in their ears

In what is either an inspired moment or an immaculate deception, the leaders of the African Union seem to have embraced the dream afresh. At their 16th Assembly, the African Heads of State and Government gave an expression to the dream by proclaiming a new theme with the slogan, “Towards Greater Unity and Integration through Shared Values.” The Commission of the African Union presented the theme behind the slogan to the member States, and following discussion on the theme, the African leaders adopted a Declaration committing them “to enhance their ownership of Shared Values.”

Please note the choice of language — “to enhance ownership of shared values.” I have chosen to take the AU and African leaders at their word, deferring critical comments to later. So I ask the forbearance of those observers with a jaundiced view of African affairs who must find all this unbelievable, coming as it does from leaders many of whom do not live by the core values. These core values are being submitted for our consideration to act as mediating principles for the Pan-Africanist agenda.

Could it be that the esteemed leaders have taken to heart the wise counsel of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu when he launched an earnest appeal calling on all of us to work hard to universalize the access to the universal (*Il faut travailler a universaliser l'accès a l'universel*), meaning to expand and deepen the application of universal principles like democracy and human rights? My own suspicion is that an angel whispered in the ears of our esteemed leaders, or perhaps the spirit of the ancestors, joined and goaded by Nkrumah's spirit, appealed to the better angels of their nature in favor of Pan-African unity! Could it be then that we are in the cusp of change? Above all, the inevitable question will come, and that is: Does ownership of the shared values mean applying them in practice in each one of the member states? If it does, we would indeed be beholding the arrival of the reign of justice.

Infected as I am by the mood of optimism underlying the AU's declaration, I am tempted to ask that we suspend disbelief and proceed on the basis of the assumption that our continent's leaders have turned over a new leaf and are determined to be the hand maidens of the new millennium — of the reign of justice. And this, despite the unresolved crises in the DRC, the Ivory Coast, Darfur, and Somalia, to name a few among the crisis areas of our benighted continent. I know I am asking a lot, but bear with me. Actually, as a lawyer, I should tremble at the prospect of a reign of justice. For I have a vague recollection of what the Bard said, that shrewd observer of the human condition by the name of William Shakespeare. He declared through one of his characters that “when the reign of justice comes the first thing we'll do is kill all the lawyers.” Another character was more frightful in his prescription, for he said: “we shall strangle the last lawyer with the entrails of the last accountant.” I am sure that if the character were speaking in our times, he would substitute the accountant with the banker.

Now, proclaiming shared values as a basis of public discourse is sound in principle; it is an important factor in the struggle for finding a common ground among Africa's divided nation-states. And as such, it should be of interest to anyone dedicated to the Pan-Africanist idea. As if anticipating our questions, Africa's heads of

state and government requested the AU Commission “to strengthen the African Governance Architecture to facilitate the harmonization of instruments and coordination of institutions in governance and democracy.” Being high-minded, they do seem to think of everything!

To reiterate my point, on the assumption that shared values are being advanced as mediating principles in the intersection of Pan-Africanism and national sovereignty, I am suspending disbelief, and will proceed to explain the content and source of what are being called shared values. Where do we find core values? At the national level core values can be gleaned from a country’s constitution; and the role of such core values in national life depends on the particular nation’s commitment to a democratic system of government and to constitutionalism, which is the soul of a democratic system. As a student of constitutional law myself, I have examined African constitutions and found that all of them provide for what we may call core values as part of the central principles of a democratic system of government — some in more detail than others. By way of example, I shall cite Kenya’s new constitution, which in many respects represents a state of the art document.

Article 4 of the new Kenyan constitution provides: “The Republic of Kenya shall be a multi-party democratic State founded on the national values and principles of governance referred to in Article 10.” And the national values and principles of governance mentioned in Article 10 are the following:

Patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people;

Human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized; Good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability; and Sustainable development

I think that the principles and values contained in Article 10 of Kenya’s constitution, listed above, can be consolidated into four or five comprehensive principles. This would make our discussion concerning them and their role more coherent. For example, democracy and good governance can be lumped together; and

equality and inclusiveness being important aspects of democracy can be included in democracy and good governance. Rule of law and human rights can also be joined as one general principle; similarly, social justice and non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized can be placed together.

These are matters of idiosyncrasies of the art of drafting and do not affect the substance of the values and principles. But one thing is certain: non-observance of any of these values and principles can be, and has generally been, a major cause of the problems of African states, but not for lack of attempts to make constitutional provisions for them. Alas! Much of Africa's problems occur not for lack of constitutional provisions but in spite of them. All too often they are honored in their breach rather than in their observance.

The foregoing remarks should clear the way for a discussion focused on what the African Union calls shared values and the role of these values in establishing the necessary constitutional framework that enables governments to govern better in their respective nations. Implicit in the African Union's statement is a belief that providing for such framework at the nation-state level can clear the way to greater unity and integration among the member states. Such presumption is in consonance with the international norms that all governments are required to observe, as mentioned in my earlier lecture concerning the principle of equal rights and self-determination. The said core values are goals upon which all government systems should be based.

Let us now consider the shared core values in relation to African problems.

Core Values as Mediating Principles

Assuming that the African leaders agree on a version of shared values similar to the ones contained in the Kenyan constitution, in what sense (or in what way) would such an agreement constitute a factor to promote "greater African unity and integration"? The presumed rationale for the AU's insistence of including shared values as an essential factor for the promotion of greater unity and integration is that the absence of such shared values has been a stumbling block

to the aim of African unity. This point is connected to the question as to the best path to follow in the struggle for African unity. As we all know, one way is the demand for immediate continental unity, which Nkrumah advocated. The other is gradual unification through regional integration and using such integration as a launching pad for eventual continental unity. Nkrumah's plea for immediate continental unity failed to persuade his fellow African leaders, and I began this lecture by stating the reason why he could not persuade them.

Is it possible that African leaders have been chastened by forty years of experience —forty years of wandering in the wilderness of disunity and underdevelopment? Or has globalization's "darker side" shocked them into accepting the necessity of concerted action? Is it conceivable that there has been a paradigm shift in African thinking that putting their individual national houses in order is a precondition for the movement toward continental unity? To that end, what better way can there be than focusing on shared values for putting the national houses in order? In asking these questions, we may be indulging in wishful thinking or dreaming, but dreaming of a greater cause is no vice. Indeed, history is full of such dreaming. The European Union originated in the dream of a French Statesman, Jean Monet.

Meanwhile, much of Africa is faced with economic, social and political problems, in some cases reaching crisis proportions. We need only think of Somalia over the last twenty years, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan's Darfur and Côte d'Ivoire. I am told that in the Chinese language the word crisis is represented by letters or characters combining danger and opportunity. Can the current crisis induce in Africans a determination to convert it to an opportunity? In the event of that happening, one might hope that the AU's resort to shared values as the source of solutions holds the key to such opportunity. We can only hope - hope springs eternal, as the saying goes.

Let us then examine the essence of some relevant core values. With that in mind, I have consolidated the values and principles listed in Article 10 of Kenya's constitution into five core values, namely: 1) Democracy; 2) National unity and stability; 3) Rule of law and human rights; 4) Sustainable development; and 5) Social justice.

As I said earlier, such consolidation should make our discussion more coherent.

Democracy

There is a general understanding that democracy is a universally-shared value. It is a necessary condition for peaceful interaction in national and international affairs, as well as for the fulfillment of other core values like human rights and social justice. So, what do we understand by democracy, and why would it help in obviating Africa's problems? The classical approach defined democracy in terms of its source and purpose, with the will of the people as source and the common good as purpose. However, in recent times, emphasis has shifted to the procedural aspect as the central feature of democracy, leading to controversy - it concerns choosing leaders through competitive elections by the people. Implicit in this concept of electoral democracy is the conviction that popular participation and competition are crucial components of democratic government. But the question remains: Do elections constitute the only core elements of democracy? Certainly, elections are a critical part of it, to the extent that elected bodies, as representative institutions, are the primary national institutions accountable to the citizens of a country. But once the representatives are elected, their responsibilities do not end when the election is over. In other words, election is a means to an end, the end being the proper functioning of representative institutions, which constitute the substantive aspects of democracy.

The procedural imperative, though essential, must be analyzed in relation to the role of representative institutions in the totality of a constitutional order.

Commenting on the undue emphasis given to process, Chicago University Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain has written:

Democracy is not and has never been primarily a means whereby popular will is tabulated and carried out but, rather, a political world within which citizens negotiate, compromise, engage and hold themselves and those they choose to represent them accountable for actions taken....Democracy's enduring promise is that citizens can come to know a good in common that they cannot know alone.

This incisive statement is a fair and accurate summary of the essence of democracy. Indeed, the other core values that I will consider later are shaped, or at least influenced, by the process in which, to quote Elshstain, “citizens negotiate, compromise and engage” in the daily business of government and in social interaction. Nor is this new to African peoples who lived by this democratic ethos; for, to borrow British historian John Lonsdale’s insightful phrase, African peoples lived side by side as “negotiating ethnicities” before colonial rule turned them into “competing tribes.”

To sum up, democracy is the keystone of the entire edifice of a country’s political system in the modern era. It is the paramount political value of our epoch, and even dictators pay lip service to it. Alas! Too many of our leaders in Africa do not go beyond paying lip service to democracy. Clearly, addressing the problem of democracy will go a long way in resolving Africa’s problems. To that end there should be a common understanding of and general commitment to the core principles of democracy. But just agreeing on doctrines or principles is not enough; this must be accompanied by an agreement on the need for creating and maintaining the necessary institutions. The absence of, or weakness in institutions to hold those in power accountable is a critical defect. In much of Africa, the absence or weakness of such institutions has been the cause of democracy deficit and the consequent political problems. Next we will consider national unity and stability.

National Unity and Stability

Both national unity and stability are essential conditions for social and economic progress. Indeed, the continued existence of a nation depends on them, and there is a sense in which the other core values are dependent on them. The question is what are the conditions that sustain stability? Well, first of all, stability is not simply the absence of conflict, just as peace is not simply the absence of war. True stability is not one imposed by force. Recent events in Egypt and elsewhere have demonstrated that stability maintained by the use of repressive force cannot endure. The January 2011 events in Cairo’s Tahrir Square have shown that you cannot keep a people subjugated

through fear and intimidation. Rather, citizens must be secure under a regime of rule of law, as opposed to arbitrary personal rule, and that under the constitution the government is subject to the law just as individual citizens are; that no one is above the law and everyone is equal under the law. In a democratic society, citizens know this to be a fundamental constitutional principle. Whenever the rule of law is violated for any reason, even for reasons of state security, a clash of values occurs, leading to serious controversy or conflict. In such a situation, a well-informed citizen who knows his/her rights would invoke another equally basic value, i.e. human rights. Stability is conditioned on the application of the other core values as fundamental principles underpinning a democratic order. And stability is a precondition to economic development and social progress.

Rule of Law and Human Rights

As already highlighted in the preceding paragraph, rule of law means that everyone is equal in the eyes of the law, and that no one is above the law. One of the achievements of the post-World War II period has been the incremental growth and the near-universal recognition of human rights in all their varied forms. Following in the footsteps of the UN Charter, numerous international resolutions and declarations were adopted by the UN General Assembly, beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The 1948 Declaration has provided the basic framework for the future development of different aspects of human rights and influenced the writing of national constitutions in this respect. A climax of the evolution of human rights was reached in 1966 with the adoption by the United Nations of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Today, the majority of world governments have ratified these international legal instruments on human rights, and most have included their essential elements in their national constitutions. But the struggle for their application continues. An interesting aspect of that struggle concerns China's attitude toward them. In 1997, when the then President of China, Jiang Zemin visited the United States, President Bill Clinton criticized China's record of violation

of religious freedom. Jiang Zemin answered that these rights are a Western invention not applicable to China. Clinton responded by telling his Chinese counterpart that he was on the wrong side of history. Over a decade later, President Obama made a similar plea requesting his Chinese counterpart, President Hu Jintao to observe human rights of free speech and religious freedom. This time, the latter's answer was different; he admitted that China had some way to go in terms of the application of human rights. This impliedly meant that China recognizes the universal nature of human rights, that it is an important part of the common heritage of humanity.

In Africa, there is no question but that all governments rhetorically pay homage to human rights and their constitutions have adopted most of the pertinent principles. Africa even adopted a Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and created the requisite institutions to implement them. But in their application many states fall far short of what is required. Clearly, Africa has a long way to go in that respect.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This definition reconciles two seemingly contradictory goals - environmental conservation and economic growth. And it offers a solution to a serious global crisis - the crisis of mass poverty on the one hand and the excessive consumption of a minority on the other. Sustainable development is the one issue that links Africa with the rest of the global community of nations; it is the issue in which globalization shows its darker side. In terms of the global political economy, the two issues of excessive consumption of a minority and mass poverty have been the driving force of environmental degradation. That is why the environmental movement is perhaps humanity's most important movement in the contemporary world. It is also the reason why sustainable development, properly understood and applied, is one of the core values that must figure in the public discourse within African nations alongside human rights and other core values. At the international level also, the ongoing, inconclusive global

negotiations to address the problems of climate change concerns Africa perhaps more critically than other continents. For that reason alone, we should commend the African Union for including it as one of the core values and principles to be considered as a factor in the struggle for greater unity and integration. Facing a common danger brings people together to find solutions.

Africa is facing environmental problems in terms of soil erosion, desertification, and ecological degradation caused by industrial waste as well as uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources such as logging of timber for commercial use. In the face of such problems African governments need to work out and implement strategies and plans of action to prevent or minimize the damage as well as replenish diminished forest regions. To those ends the AU's declaration of shared values should include concerted efforts at regional levels. A case in point is the Nile river basin, which traverses several countries stretching from Egypt in North Africa to the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region. In this respect, some African scholars are showing the way in sounding the alarm of the coming dangers, warning all concerned and especially the leaders of the affected countries, urging them to rethink their national focus in favor of collective strategies from which all can benefit as well as avoid, or at least mitigate, further disasters. (See Okbazghi Yohannes, *Water Resources and Inter-Riparian Relationships in the Nile Basin*, 2008).

There is also the matter of dumping of toxic waste, including nuclear waste that has occurred in some African countries. This is perhaps an issue around which all Africa can and must unite in order to save the continent from becoming a dumping ground of toxic waste originating in Europe, America or elsewhere. It is worth mentioning that the Somali pirates first rose up against dumping of toxic waste as well as of illegal fishing in Somali territorial waters by foreign ships that happened in the wake of the collapse of the Somali state in the early 1990s. The incidence of piracy later metamorphosed into a different kind of enterprise against merchant ships and yachts with hostage taking and demands for ransom as the principal aim.

Africa also needs to agree on continent-wide cooperation to preserve its wildlife, including endangered animals. Recently, a

battle for the future of Africa's oldest national park erupted in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), pitting British oil companies keen on exploration against the green lobby. Part of the exploration site lies in the Virunga National Park, a world heritage site famous for its endangered mountain gorillas. It was first reported that Congo's environment minister was considering lobbying several local members of parliament to redraw the boundaries of the park in order to enable the start of oil exploration at the heart of the block. It appears that this attempt was later rejected. (See Financial Times: Battle over Oil in Congo National Park, February 22, 2011).

There is a lesson Africa can learn from what has been happening lately in the Amazon region of Brazil. First of all, it is worth noting the role of cattle ranching and the beef industry in deforestation in that part of the world. The environmental organization Greenpeace has established a link between the Amazon region's cattle and beef industry and its supply chain with companies like Adidas, Nike, Toyota, Gucci and Kraft. I would also like to cite a remarkable act of a dedicated and fearless prosecutor of Brazil's state of Para, the home of most of the Amazon's cattle-herd. The prosecutor, Daniel Avelino, probably saved more rain forest than many conservation groups ever will by the drastic action he took. He identified 20 big cattle ranches operating on illegally cleared land and traced the slaughterhouse buying their cattle. He then established that some of the world's best-known retailers, including Wal-Mart and Carrefour, were buying meat from them. He fined the ranchers and abattoirs the equivalent of \$1.2 billion, and told retailers that unless they cleared up their supply chains through legal channels, he would fine them too. (See the Economist, September 25, 2010).

The response was dramatic. The retailers immediately stopped buying meat from Para and the slaughterhouse closed, with the abattoirs promising not to deforest illegally. This story speaks to the crucial role dedicated government officials can play to help stem the tide of deforestation and other environmental damage. It provides an object lesson for Africa. Also, it helps when governments of consumer countries pass legislation criminalizing the import of

illegal timber, as the European Union did in July 2010, and the United States in 2008 by amending the Lacey Act.

Last, but not least, I turn to social justice.

Social Justice

Social justice dovetails with human rights principles. Human rights may be partly judged by some standards of the achievement of human security, measured in terms of the provision or lack of provision of some services to citizens. To those ends, the United Nations has created a system of measurement called the UN Human Development Index (UDI). This is a useful measure of human wellbeing going beyond GDP - beyond the production of goods and the building of roads and bridges and other infrastructure, important though these are. The UN UDI standard of measurement embraces different dimensions of human development, most importantly: the availability of affordable and adequate nutrition; provision of affordable education; access to good health services; and affordable housing in safe neighborhoods.

Let me just reiterate that in adopting the African Union's theme of shared values, my assumption is that such a framework will help us focus our minds on the most critical issues and objectives in our pursuit of African unity. I must also say that I know Africa's reality and the tremendous challenge facing us in this pursuit. I now change gear and move to briefly note Africa's challenges in the age of globalization. Facing this new challenge is the often-neglected subject of African traditional heritage, which to a large extent is an important part of the said core values. It is my view that African traditional values underpinning communal solidarity and cohesion - notably those human values of caring and sharing and mutual respect, known as social capital by sociologists—must be rehabilitated and considered together with the core values summarized above.

It is also worth underscoring that the set of values summarized above are related and interdependent. Stability and peace are primordial requirements for human life and for sustainable development, as are democracy and good governance. To be sustainable or enduring, stability must be based on justice. Good

governance speaks to the integrity of those who govern - it means the absence of corruption and the meticulous response to the aspirations of the people. No country can create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves, or its police are bought off by drug traffickers. Or, as Barak Obama said in his Accra speech in July 2009, "No person wants to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of brutality and bribery." And he also said, "Africa does not need strong men, it needs strong institutions."

Africa and the Challenge of Globalization

As we live in a globalized world we need to ask: what are the challenges of globalization for Africa? Earlier, I made reference to the darker side of globalization. This is evident in world trade. In the current reality of global relations, trade, as the agent of economic integration, involves unequal exchange or unfair terms of trade between the powerful countries of the "North" and the weaker "South." It also involves exploitation of cheap labor and repressive national legislation targeted at labor unions, which denies working people the power to bargain for fair wages and better working conditions. If things continue the way they are, global economic integration through trade and investment will also eventually lead to the decline of national sovereignty. Corporations with global reach exert more influence, weakening the power of national governments to act autonomously. Globalization has also created a highly charged competitive economic environment that causes a great deal of anxiety. Such anxiety is compounded by the breaking of national barriers and the introduction into the domestic market of cheaply produced goods that drive domestic small traders out of business. In the face of this reality Nkrumah's point that African political unity is a precondition as defense against economic exploitation and related unfair treatment by global forces is clearly prophetic. Nor is the advantage of continental unity subject to dispute. Size matters, particularly in times of crisis; crises do not overwhelm a bigger country like the United States of America, which is a continental country. For example, the recent financial crisis overwhelmed

Greece and Ireland whereas its effect on a country like the United States was not as serious, by comparison.

Another point that should be emphasized is that the global reach of multinational corporations is no longer limited to American and European corporations. China, India, Russia, and others, including some Gulf States, are using business as an instrument of state power to advance their interests, profiting from the breakdown of national barriers facilitated by globalization. China in particular is now leading in the use of state power to snatch a growing share of the world's natural resources, most of them in Africa.

One thing is clear. Such core values as democracy and human rights do not figure prominently in the race for acquisition of the said natural resources. In this respect there is bound to be a gap between the views and attitudes of government officials on the one hand, and those of the greater mass of their populations on the other, as to who will ultimately benefit from the grant of concessionary rights to foreign companies for the exploitation of natural resources like oil and minerals. It bears repetition that today, as before, Africa is at a disadvantage. America and Europe and lately China are interested only in exploiting the energy and mineral resources of the continent. America's and Europe's deeds on sustainable development do not match their words. Africa's challenge in our times includes dealing with new emerging economies and the potential of large investment in infrastructure and trade. It is the task of scholars and African scholars in particular, to analyze the nature and extent of the consequences of the global connection, sorting out the negative from the positive, and to help map out strategies for attenuating the negative effects and reinforcing the positive. Whether the Chinese, Indians and Brazilians will behave differently from the Americans and Europeans remains to be seen; but the available evidence and lessons of history suggest that they will not. All in all, Africa's unity is more urgently needed today than ever before; and the shared values approach put forward by the AU is a good beginning. Let us challenge the AU leaders and all leaders of Africa to translate this promising start to practical measures. Let us hope that the rhetoric will be matched by action.

I started this lecture by reference to the AU's statement proclaiming the theme of shared values. The AU exhorted member states to enhance their ownership of such shared values as a necessary step towards the achievement of African unity and integration. I assume that the use of the word integration is in reference to the integration of African economies and societies, not integration with globalized market capitalism. I asked the audience to suspend their disbelief considering the AU's bold project of appealing to shared values in the pursuit of African unity and integration. In the spirit of that request, I am now posing a challenge to all of us to demand that the AU fulfill its promise. The concluding recommendations are designed to push forward the fulfillment of the promise. The advantage of the shared values approach to African unity is clear in terms of its capacity to direct the attention of national leaders and opinion makers to focus on crucial values codified in their constitutions. The assumption is that the leaders are sworn to uphold those values.

Can such an assumption pass the test given Africa's reality? There is the rub. The AU has undertaken a huge task and will need all the technical, organizational and intellectual support it can muster. One of the useful criteria by which the AU can test government policy is budget allocation. Where and how the national budget is allocated is indicative of what the government values. As of today, a study of the budget allocation of five African countries - Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, and Zambia - shows varying proportions of funds allocated to the five values we discussed. Though there is a growing awareness of the importance attached to the core values in all of them, nonetheless the security sector still claims the lion's share of resources in comparison to the other values such as sustainable development and social justice. It is the argument of Pan-Africanists that with unity and integration there would be a proportionate increase in favor of sustainable development and social justice.

A question that inevitably arises is: Does the AU command the necessary resources - institutional and material - to compel member governments to live by or implement the requirements implied in the shared core values, notably upholding democratic principles? Can it muster the courage of its convictions (as stipulated in the

shared values theme) to see to it that those who violate the said shared values are properly sanctioned? In particular, can it enforce the application of the Banjul Charter on human and peoples' rights? How can we make sure that this is so in the face of the AU's record with regard to the tragedy of Darfur? What about the events in the Ivory Coast in which a sitting president refused to honor the will of the voters despite the AU's insistence that he hand over power to the opponent who won the election? And Gbagbo was not the only errant leader, only the latest example in the rogues' gallery of African leaders. Do you remember Hosni Mubarak whom a popular revolution deposed when he was preparing to arrange reelection for the sixth time?

Conclusion

What can we conclude from the preceding discussion?

First and foremost, there is rhetorical commitment to Pan-Africanism. The African Union's call for unity and integration on the basis of shared values is a promising initiative. Clearly, the AU has taken a bold step in the right direction. But, in view of the African reality, many will find this hard to believe. My request for suspension of disbelief was based on that reality. I would now like to beg your indulgence for I will shift gears and ask you to change the suspension of disbelief into a positive commendation of the AU leaders and encourage them to challenge all Africans, and particularly our leaders to think big and work towards the goal of unity and integration on the basis of our shared values. The reality also compels me to urge the people, especially the young generation to be forceful in challenging all governments at all levels. As far as the AU's promise is concerned, I would urge the leaders to go beyond rhetorical declarations and act more vigorously insisting that our governments do the following:

- Abide by the rules of law ordained by their respective constitutions and laws;
- Create regional trade groupings; or where they exist, reinforce them;

- Create mechanisms of enforcement to hold errant leaders to account for their acts and omissions. To that end, the eight departments of the AU, each one headed by a Commissioner, must be turned into effective agents;
- Encourage the independence of the judiciary in each of its member nations;
- Encourage the development of strong professional associations, especially related to law and a free press;
- Encourage the development of civil society organizations; and
- Encourage the creation of an enabling environment to tap the increasing African expertise in all technical fields related to trade and commerce, culture and other areas.

In such endeavors Pan-Africanism may need to be redefined to accommodate new modes of thinking derived from research and creative writing. Our poets, as much as our historians and sociologists, have to weigh in on this Herculean task. We need a new generation of more Wole Soyinkas and Samir Amins to help break the intellectual barriers that have blocked us from transitioning to a much-needed unity in this age of globalization when the world has become a village, but a world in which Africa is being left behind, divided and underdeveloped. We Africans have to acknowledge that we must address our shortcomings and institute change in all fields. By themselves, such changes will not overcome all the inequities of the global economic and political order over which our continent has little control. Only an enlightened, progressive and competent African leadership can summon the will and mobilize the energy and commitment of our populations for the challenges that lie ahead, including the challenge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that threatens to spread.

My last word is addressed to our African youth. Youth of Africa: you represent the future. You must, therefore, organize and mobilize your enormous energy - the energy that I feel flowing toward me from the gallery where the youthful members of this gathering are seated. As a concerned father, an old fighter and Pan-Africanist, I call on you to challenge us, your elders. One suggestion I can make

is for African youth in every country throughout Africa to establish networks, and to create parallel parliaments. Try to use the shared values principle as a litmus test to the sincerity of our leaders. If the African Union and the heads of state and government of Africa are sincere in their shared values proposals, they will respond positively. So challenge them. Test them.

God bless you. Africa Must Unite

Mungu Ibariki Afrika!

Vote of Thanks to Professor Bereket Habte Selassie

By Khoti Chilomba Kamanga²

Get up, stand up, and fight for pan-Africanism!

It is evidently a privilege and a humbling one at that, to be called upon to deliver a vote of thanks to an accomplished public academic, long-serving civil servant, tested political rebel and writer of repute. And, more significantly, a devoted pan-Africanist. You can therefore appreciate my sense of awe and trepidation. It is for this reason that my rejoinder can only be selective and in doing so, hopefully accurately capture the crucial issues of the moment.

As I sat over there, listening to his lecture and having read his intensely rich, stimulating memoirs, *The Crown and the Pen*, my mind raced back and forth trying to remain focused on what I could put down as the most fundamental, substantive issues Professor Selassie is leaving behind as he flies out of Tanzania and returns to his working life across the Atlantic.

To begin with, are his privileged and densely rich engagements with the golden age of pan-Africanism, including participating at the first ever All African Peoples Conference, in Accra, Ghana, in December 1958, and witnessing first hand the birth pangs of the organisation of African unity, the precursor to the African Union (AU) we know today. His memoirs give us that rare insight into what it meant for those present as the Gold Coast shed off the shackles of colonialism, and overnight transformed into a living symbol of mother Africa's collective pride, liberation and hope. No less striking was the relatively youthful age at which he was asked to serve Emperor Haile Selassie's government in the highly coveted position of attorney general. And, how subsequently, this exalted position in

his imperial majesty's government, never clouded his mind from distinguishing between the acceptable, and unacceptable, in terms of governance. In a rare display of valour, he resigned in protest.

Leaving behind the comforts of life and office to join rebel forces in Eritrea is as striking, as it is inspiring. The 7 day march on the road to Sahel with Eritrean guerillas, the tegadelti, reminds one of the heroic exploits of other African guerillas in such places as Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Namibia, and for that matter, of fidelista guerillas in Cuba's Sierra Maestra. Having witnessed a 'stolen revolution' in Ethiopia, he would equally live to see a 'betrayed liberation' in his motherland of Eritrea. While a sense of higher purpose pulled him towards the Eritrean relief agency he had helped to create, the responsibility to family, left in limbo in Washington DC, pulled unrelentingly, in the opposite direction.

Bereket Selassie is no stranger to the academic and legal fraternity in Tanzania. He attended a conference on African customary law in 1963, here in Dar es Salaam, and returned to the Faculty of Law in the summer of 1964. With amazing prescience, his 1974 doctoral thesis foreshadowed the emergence of the African post-independence imperial president, or as he prefers to call the phenomenon, 'neo-presidentialism'. Whether in the USA or Europe, Professor Selassie took the most active part in student politics of the day, including the penning of a controversial opinion in the Ethiopian Herald as early as 1964.

And as you would expect, people who are faithful to principles, progressive thinking, aren't everyone's hero. I found it both amusing and unfortunate that the same epithets used against Professor Bereket Selassie in the late 1960s, at a time he was serving imperial banishing orders in Harar province, have crept up in cyberspace today. Without much originality, decorum or elementary civility, Professor Bereket Selassie is portrayed as a 'mercenary', parasite, and a self-righteous man.

Very little if anything from his thinking, work, and especially from his presentation today, ever suggests that any of those slurs are remotely warranted. I would, with respect, go further and suggest that to the contrary, from Professor Bereket Selassie's abundantly rich

intellectual and political life, there are many things which the youth in this gathering can take with them for the benefit of their respective nations, and indeed, Pan-Africanism. Two or three stand out.

Firstly is the deeply inquisitive mind; the questioning mind. The habit of putting under the microscope all that you hear, see and read; a mind intolerant of dogma. The mind of an 'intellectual rebel'. Some would say this comes naturally with lawyers and academics. But we see this trait in Professor Selassie much earlier in his life. Barely in his teens in his home village of Adi Nifas, he stepped aside from a ritual dance and song condemning a fornicator to flogging. He even mercilessly questions his own people's vanity in ascribing to Eritrea, the cradle of the river Nile. Likewise, the daily ritual of singing praise songs of the Italian fascist leader, Benito Mussolini, at the colonial elementary school (at the Scuola Vittorio Emmanuele III), always left him dismayed. However, the questioning, rebellious mind is worth nothing, if not accompanied by explicit actions, for all to see. To stand up, and be counted. Get up, stand up and fight for your rights, Peter Tosh reminded us in his classic reggae mega-hit. To make ends meet, summer 1950 for example, found Professor Bereket Selassie working in the menial position of a kitchen hand in a restaurant in central London's Marble Arch area. Convinced that his supervisor was harassing him and being unreasonable, he protested by plainly speaking out his mind, and throwing his apron in her pretty face and marching out. And, at a cost of losing two weeks of wages. But, not before casting on the already petrified lady a traditional curse line: "may the spirit of my ancestors, sitting on the Obelisk of Axum and on the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela haunt you all your wakeful moments and pursue you to your grave!"

Later, while working as his imperial majesty's inspector general he became convinced that the executive was exercising unacceptable influence on the judiciary, through the 'court inspection' procedure. The procedure represented an affront to the constitutional principle of independence of the judiciary. And, what was the result of this intellectual and Professorial open-mindedness? He put down his recommendations in an open memorandum addressed to his superiors. In the aftermath of the abortive December 1960 coup,

Professor Bereket Selassie was appointed to sit in judgment over the treason case of a coup commander he personally admired and whose reformist cause he sympathised with. His response, which was rather ingenious, had the effect of recusing him from sitting on the bench and a substitute judge being found.

It is quiet instructive that at all times Professor Bereket Habte Selassie worked in concert with like minded students, politicians, fighters and grass-root leadership. A consistent credo in his life, it would seem, was the Nkrumah war cry: organise, don't agonise!

As I conclude, I wish to recall what Amilcar Cabral said as he stood by the mortal remains of Kwame Nkrumah, that 13th day of May 1972 in Conakry, Guinea. Cabral, among other things, said:

We must however draw the lesson from all events. Even at the moment of grief, we must ask ourselves some questions, the better to understand the past, live the present, and prepare for the future.

What lessons do we draw from Professor Bereket Habte Selassie's presence here today, and his Nyerere Annual Lecture to the 3rd Julius Nyerere Intellectual Festival Week? Hopefully, I would not be far off the mark, if I were to return to two critical factors. I choose these because of their potential in challenging unbridled globalisation and promoting Pan-Africanism. And my remarks are particularly directed at militant youth and students.

First it would seem that a clear and deep understanding of the surrounding, unfolding reality is pivotal. An effort to scratch beyond the surface, and get to the bottom of fundamental issues is critical beyond words. Now, this doesn't happen easily! Without the inquisitive, penetrating, rebellious mind, one is left parroting old and tired dogmas, and questionable developmental theories unlikely to liberate the African mind from intellectual dependence and bondage. Professor Selassie persistently has been asking: how true? Is this the only sensible and sustainable pathway? One recent illustration of this intellectual doubting Thomas is the Zambian economist, Dambisa Moyo. Her 2009 book *Dead Aid*, refreshingly

kicks in the backside the prevalent notion that Africa's development solution lies in giving the continent more aid.

Mere questioning in and by itself is a giant leap forward. When our forebears began casting doubt about the invincibility of their slave masters, or much later, the superiority of imperial colonial forces, they unknowingly had begun unleashing latent liberating firepower. At the other extreme, certain forms of questioning and interrogation are no different from mere agonising, and shedding of crocodile tears.

If intellectual rebellion, the questioning mind, is to begin making a political and social difference, it must be articulated in a manner that is devoid of any ambiguity and must be noticeable. At this stage, the intellectual rebel stands up to be identified with the cause in question, in our case, Pan-Africanism. He or she walks the talk, if I may say so. Visibly stands up, to be counted.

Secondly, there hardly is a major cause, a struggle of significance, that has ever been articulated, and successfully fought, through the exclusive efforts of an individual, however endowed that person or conspiratorial group of persons may be. Which leads me again, to the Nkrumah war cry I intimated to earlier: organise, don't agonise!

At various stages in his life, Professor Bereket Habte Selassie, whether by intuition or design, seemed always to work around organised groups. Whether it was a student body at college, conspiratorial group of army officers, Eritrean rebels, relief agencies, or constitutional reforms, it was always in concert with others.

For these things, and your humility in accepting to join us to celebrate the life of Mwalimu and Pan-Africanism, let me on the behalf of all attending, say to Professor Bereket Habte Selassie, ahsante, ahsante sana!

Get up, stand up, and fight for Pan-Africanism!

Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Distinguished Lecturer, 2012

**Art, Artists and the Flowering
of Pan-Africana Liberated Zone**

Professor Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo

Citation Read by Professor Issa Shivji

[Minute of silence in memory and honour of Steven Kanumba]

Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, Ambassador Fulgence Kazaura, Vice-Chancellor Professor Rwekaza Mukandala, our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer-designate, Prof. Mĩcere Mũgo, our Special Lecturer, Ndugu Abdilatif Abdalla, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you once again, this time to the Fourth Julius Nyerere Intellectual Festival. The Festival has become so popular as an annual event that we had to reverse our earlier decision to hold it every two years. We have no regrets that we did so. With their great ingenuity, *Wanakigoda*, as the young members of our committees call themselves, have organised the Festival with unique features. First, the very theme – ART IN LIBERATION. We found it very exciting and we hope you too will find it exciting. Second, all our discussions and debates tomorrow will be in Kiswahili. You can't express your culture, much less culture as an art of liberation, in a foreign tongue. As our great poet Shaaban Robert, sings:

titi la mama litamu, hata likiwa la mbwa
a mother's breast tastes good, even if it's canine

And, it is our singular pleasure to have our sister Mĩcere as the Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer, 2012, and our brother Abdilatif as a special lecturer. Both are accomplished poets. Both wrote and sang their poems protesting against injustice and oppression. For them the practice of culture is an act of liberation. As Frantz Fanon addressing the 'native' intellectual says: "...you substantiate [culture's] existence in the fight which the people wage against the forces of occupation." (Frantz Fanon, 1967, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin, p. 179.).

Kwa hivyo, mabibi na mabwana:

*Utamaduni si maonyesho,
Ya kijiji cha makumbusho.
Utamaduni si burudisho,
La wageni na watalii.*

*Utamaduni si dawati
La kukusanya visenti
Vya MabwanaVijisenti
Wa uzawani au ughaibuni.*

*Utamaduni ni roho ya Taifa,
Utamaduni ni silaha ya wadhaifu.
Utamaduni ni kitendo cha ukombozi,
Utamaduni ni kielelezo cha utu, wa Ubuntu.*

But there is a price to be paid for practicing culture as an art of liberation. Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo paid a price for staging plays of protest. Moi's regime took away her passport, harassed her as a woman and fighter, stripped her of her Kenyan citizenship, forced her into exile. A Pan-Africanist does not need a piece of paper to prove her Africanness. She was welcomed in Zimbabwe where she spent six years with her two daughters, her comrades in feminism.

Mĩcere Mũgo currently teaches at Syracuse University, in the belly of the beast, and practices her culture in the birthplace of Pan-Africanism - the land of William DuBois and Marcus Garvey, of Malcom X and Manning Marable.

Mĩcere is an accomplished writer and an academic with over half a dozen well-known books to her credit. She has won many awards. She is a fiery feminist and an avowed Pan-Africanist. But, most important of all, she shares with Mwalimu Nyerere a life-long commitment to African liberation and Pan-Africanism.

Do you want to know who Mĩcere Githae Mũgo is? Well ...

*She is an intellectual, not an impostor
She is a feminist, not feminine
She is a fighter, not a fraudster*

*She is a dedicated teacher, not an academic entrepreneur
She is a guide to her students,
A leader to her compatriots,
And a comrade to her colleagues.*

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I present to you Professor Mĩcere Mũgo, let me invite Mshai Mwangola to give us a glimpse of Mĩcere Mũgo's World of Poems.

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, distinguished Mlimani intellectual community, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have great pleasure to present to you our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer, 2012, Professor Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo.

Art, Artists and the Flowering of Pan-Africana Liberated Zones

Point of Entry: Hodi! Hodi!

In composition and delivery, this lecture uses oracy, as understood within the context of African Orature: the art of the spoken word. Orate art advocates a two way dialogical mode of communication that aims at engaging the audience as active participants, inviting their responses and soliciting their affirmation. Thus the orator and her/his audience become co-travellers along the intellectual, imaginative journey at hand. This approach minimises quotations and footnotes, relying instead on evoking sources and weaving in anecdotal illustrations. It also uses balance, antithesis, rhetoric, reiteration and purposeful repetition for re-enforcement of ideas. As an orature scholar, I could not think of a better way to honour Mwalimu Nyerere, for he consistently urged African educationists and theoreticians to root themselves and their work in progressive, home-grown African paradigms. Amilcar Cabral made the same call, insisting that a progressive “Return to the Source” was a vital part of the liberation process. Pan Africanist discourses cannot afford to ignore this call if artists and academicians are to rescue African sites of knowledge from dismissal, distortion, demonization and attempted erasure by imperialist cultural invasions that are still ongoing. My address posits that a progressive “Return to the Source” is indispensable for the creation and flowering of liberated zones.

Prelude

Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, Professor Rwekeza Mukandala and the entire UDSM community, please accept my most sincere and humble gratitude for this rare honour. My colleague and dear friend, Issa Shivji, Distinguished Mwalimu Nyerere Professor of Pan-African Studies, thank you very much for initiating my invitation to UDSM and congratulations again

on all your accomplishments as the founding Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Professor of Pan-African Studies. I will say more about the significance of the endowment of this special chair later on in my address. All other members of the audience, please consider all protocols as observed and thank you immensely for being here. It is a joy to be back at the University of Dar es Salaam where I used to come as the external examiner in Literature during the mid-1970s.

As intimated, this is a high and humbling honour that the University of Dar es Salaam has bestowed upon me. Receiving an award named after Mwalimu Julius Nyerere is not only a unique privilege, but also a daunting challenge. You see, in the Gikũyũ culture, a child is supposed to be the reincarnation of the person she is named after and this can be an albatross to carry in life, especially when the person one is named after is a celebrity, because the pressure to live up to the name is forever present. I suppose this is better than being named after a loser because the challenge of cleaning up such an image is a much more daunting task. So, delighted as I am to be this year's Nyerere award recipient, I am well aware of the fact that it comes with a heavy responsibility. For, how does one actually emulate Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere? My dilemma notwithstanding, I feel privileged to be standing here today addressing you as the 2012 Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer. The historicity of the moment is not, and will never be, lost upon me. For one, standing at a podium in a hall which Mwalimu visited so often, a day before his birthday anniversary, is one of the most symbolic moments of my life in that Nyerere has always been one of my favourite African theoreticians, not to mention political leader. Moreover, I am conscious of the fact that I am participant in and witness to the commemoration of his birthday at a time in history when what he stood for is needed more than ever. Hopefully, these Nyerere commemorations will force us to seriously revisit his vision and even better, revive it, as it remains an attractive alternative to 21st century corporate world/market economy takeover.

Dialogue Cycle 1: Call and Response...

The topic of my lecture is “Art, Artists and the Flowering of Pan-Africana Liberated Zones.” I would like to open with inviting the audience to hold dialogue with me in African orature style, which I will explain momentarily. I know that this might challenge the comfort zone of those who came here expecting to simply sit back and listen to a lecture, but transgressing such zones is one of the tasks of an African Orature artist. As I have indicated, I believe it is imperative for African scholars to evoke indigenous African styles of speech-delivery as a part of their contribution to intellectual discourse.

Here is the format. I will call upon you at intervals during my delivery to make sure we “are together” throughout the “journey”, saluting you as: “*Asomi!*” “*Wananchi!*” “*Abantu!*” “*Wenzangu!*” - and other variants. When I make the call, please respond: “*Yoo!*” “*Naam!*” “*Sema!*” - ...whatever comes more readily to you. Once I have established that you are still in the lecture hall with me, I will ask “for the road”, using questions such as: “Shall I speak?” “Are we together?” “Shall I go on?” “Shall I proceed?” “Do I still have the road?” There will be variants here as well. You will then answer: “*Naam!*” “*Yes!*” “*Proceed!*” “*Speak!*” - or whatever comes to mind. Now, in the name of transparency, I have to warn you that from time to time I might pose a “trick” question just to make sure you are alert and so, watch out for the trap. Lastly, when my time is up and you notice the chairperson getting ready to stop me, if I ask, “Shall I end here?” Please remember to say, “No!” Most importantly, don’t forget to make it really loud.

Call: Asomi!... (Response)...

Do I have the road?... (Response)...

Tomorrow, April 13th 2012, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere will be ninety years old, and I say “will be” deliberately, for, even though I don’t know how they count time on the other side of life, I know that the elder is here with us today as we celebrate his life and commemorate his legacy. And so are other ancestors whose physical absence is always a historical presence among the living. Ashe!

Call: Asomi!... (Response)...

Shall I speak?... (Response)...

Dialogue Cycle 2: Paying Mwalimu Homage ...

To state the obvious, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere is not only the best known son of Tanzania, but one of the most beloved sons of Africa and its Global Diaspora. He is a global icon and living legend who stands tall in many arenas as a thinker, theoretician, artist, linguist, innovator, and political leader who never grew fat at the expense of his people. This is unique in a neo-colonial world where theft, greed, corruption, power-mongering, materialism, and capital accumulation at the expense of the poor, have come to be political fashions. Mwalimu's refusal to become a grabber is a rare virtue among the political leadership of Africa and today's world where the Market has become God. Nyerere's name as a true "son of the soil", to borrow from the title of Wilson Katiyo's novel, will remain etched in African history. He was a visionary who constantly churned out original ideas to interrogate colonial and imperialist mega narratives of Africa, not to mention their tricks as empire builders. Let history never forget to celebrate Mwalimu as an imaginative innovator who had the courage to dream and imagine a new Tanzania, under Ujamaa, recognising that blind imitation of dominating systems is a form of neo-enslavement. As the late Audrey Lorde, the brilliant African American poet and feminist theoretician cautioned, there is nothing more foolish than the idea of dominated people deceiving themselves that they can use "master's" tools to build their house. Mwalimu knew this and had what Maya Angelou, another icon in African American literature, would describe as "audaciousness" in daring to imagine a society built upon Ujamaa - anathema at a time when most independent African nations had chosen a capitalist mode of development. Now, whether Ujamaa worked or did not work in Tanzania is not the issue here. What is not in doubt is the fact that Mwalimu's experimentation with a system that stood in opposition to capitalism was an act of courage. Within the context of our topic today, it was a bold attempt to create a liberated zone in independent Africa where the very economic systems that had exploited Africans were being endorsed by the newly emerging neo-colonial leadership.

Call: Wananchi!...(Response)...

Shall I proceed?...(Response)...

At the expense of repeating myself, I say: emerging with alternatives that take us away from colonial and neo-colonial paradigms is a bold attempt at creating liberated zones. Mwalimu did not even mince words about this because to him, so-called “capitalistic development” was nothing short of the perpetuation of what he called a “man-eat-man society”. So, in these neo-liberal days and as economic cannibalism goes rampant, let us never forget that for Mwalimu this was not an option. Nyerere not just sought to mould an alternative economic system for independent Tanzania, but to forge a humane world guided by new theories and conceptualisations of reality. Just as, significantly, he understood the imperative of re-mapping colonial borders both physically and mentally, thus creating yet more liberated zones. I will elaborate on this in quite some detail as it is one of Mwalimu’s most significant contributions and legacies.

Mwalimu’s genius in creating new spaces has left a mark on the whole of Eastern Africa, parts of Central Africa and Africa at large. By hosting African liberation movements and refugees during his presidency, he nurtured an openness and hospitality among Tanzanians that few countries in Africa can boast of. In this regard, Tanzania has historically not only demonstrated *utu* and a spirit of Pan- Africanism, but opened liberated zones for Kiswahili to flower as an African *lingua franca*. Speaking of Pan- Africanism, Mr. Vice Chancellor, your creation of the University Chair in Pan-African Studies is a continuation of this tradition of opening up new spaces for the intellectual evolution of Africana liberated zones. It is a reassuring commitment in these neo-colonial times when the self-entanglement of national chauvinism and ethnic exclusionism have led to extreme parochialism, fuelling hatred that has turned Africa’s borders into engulfing war zones.

In this regard the University of Dar es Salaam remains true to the Nyerere and Tanzanian spirit of embracing a Pan- Africanist vision. For, lest we forget it, Tanzania’s history has firm etchings of African liberation movements and struggles that found a home here at a time when colonial violence had forced freedom fighters to flee their own homes. The list of such liberation movements and exiled communities stretches from Mtwara and Lindi, through Dar es

Salaam and Bagamoyo, past Moshi to Arusha, where the East African Court of Justice and the African Court on Human and People's Rights now stand in judgment of a continuing history of abuse of human rights and crimes against humanity. At some point or other during anti-colonial struggles, countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and others had liberation movements operating from Tanzania.

Call: Abantu! (Response)...

Are we together?...(Response)...

So, this week, we pay homage to Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and to Tanzania for their redefinition of “home” in such a manner that it included disinherited sons and daughters of Africa. We embrace Tanzania for expanding Africa's liberated zones. We honour this country for defying colonial borders that were imposed on Africa after the Berlin conference in 1884-85. These imposed borders remain antagonistic dividers. A scholar from Nigeria who was visiting Cornell University at the same time as I was, during the early 1990s, told a story about somebody's aunt whose house, at the border between Nigeria and Benin, had a bedroom in one country and a kitchen in the other. I have always hoped that this is one of those satirical, proverbial orature tales meant to illustrate the ridiculousness behind colonial borders because I would certainly hope the owner did not need a passport to move between her kitchen and bedroom. Whatever the case, the story makes its point: the arbitrariness, illogicality, and whimsical reasoning of empire builders – not to mention their human bankruptcy – smack of schizophrenia. We celebrate the courage shown by Mwalimu Nyerere and the people of Tanzania in defying colonial borders and in so doing, helping to expand Africa's liberated zones.

Call: Ndugu zangu!... (Response)...

Mnalala?...(Response)...

Sharing is never easy for most people, even when they have plenty to go around. I remember how as children, my sisters, brothers and I, resented people who made it a habit of accidentally dropping in just when a meal was being served and could not understand

why my parents would welcome them to share our food. Similarly, some Tanzanians must have wondered how the country's resources would hold out with so many refugees streaming into the country, especially after the country's economic resources had started shrinking. However, what the people of Tanzania did by opening up their homes to liberation movements and to refugees facilitated the mushrooming and spreading of Kiswahili across a huge chunk of the African continent and ultimately, the international scene. For instance, in Syracuse, Upstate New York, where I currently live, there has been a huge resettlement programme for refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, DRC, Somalia, and the Sudan. Most of them communicate in Kiswahili. Thus, through a spirit of sharing, Tanzanians have challenged the power of dominating colonial languages and in so doing "turned sideways walls" that once hindered communication into "bridges" – to paraphrase Angela Davis' famous analogy in *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*. Indeed, "walls turned sideways are bridges". Today if you go through Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, DRC, Mozambique, Somalia, Zambia and even further out, you will be able to communicate in some form of Kiswahili "dialect". I say: this is liberation of important ground.

So, as we commemorate Mwalimu, let us not forget that his legacy of accommodating freedom fighters and providing refugees with shelter in Tanzania played a big part in facilitating the spreading of Kiswahili as a linguistic art form. Now, Tanzanians might laugh at the way some of their neighbours speak the language, but in these new dialects, I dare say, pidgin Kiswahili is under evolution. The language is spreading like bush fire, to borrow a metaphor from Chinua Achebe and the Igbo people. Kiswahili has demonstrated the capacity to not just create liberated zones, but to bring about the flowering of Pan-Africanist cultural exchange. Music in Kiswahili has been a special flowering zone in this regard. The irony is that this flowering of Kiswahili seemed impossible only four decades ago, even as seeds for it were being planted. For instance, during the 1977 Festival of the Arts and Cultures of the Black World (FESTAC) in Lagos, Nigeria, popularly known as FESTAC 77 - which I participated in - Professor Wole Soyinka, the first laureate of the

Nyerere Distinguished Lectureship, had proposed that Kiswahili be developed as the lingua franca of Africa. At that time many people thought he was being a dreaming idealist. The proposition appeared to be a romantic escapade. In hindsight, Soyinka was being absolutely prophetic. Today I want to suggest that the art of language is the passport we need in Africa and Global Africa for “border crossings” and yes, yes, even “border transgressions” if we are to pave the way for Pan-Africana connectedness and consciousness. The seed for this possibility was planted right here on Tanzania’s soil and now human bees are busy transporting the pollen from the flowering plant across the whole of Africa and around the globe.

Call: Wananchi! (Response)...

Do I still have the road?... (Response)...

In terms of artistic and cultural production, Mwalimu Nyerere was equally clear. He realised so well their importance in self and collective definition, as well as their critical role in creating liberated zones, that he went all out to ensure their institutionalisation into national policy. In his famous speech of December 10 1962, entitled, “Culture is the Soul of the Nation”, delivered at the Tanzanian parliament, Mwalimu rationalised his decision to create a Ministry of National Culture and Youth. He argued that “culture was the soul and the spirit of any nation” and warned that “a country that lets its own culture die is no more than a collection of people without the soul that makes them a nation.” More than this, Mwalimu was a cultural practitioner himself. In fact, Ali Mazrui classifies president Nyerere as one of Africa’s “poet philosopher kings” along with Agostinho Neto of Angola and Sedar Senghor of Senegal, among others. In terms of artistic and linguistic contribution, Mwalimu pioneered the translation of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar* by Shakespeare into Kiswahili, with the aim of making them available to ordinary people. In demystifying the mighty Shakespeare and attempting to close the gap between Gideon Mutiso’s asomi and ordinary wananchi, one could argue that Nyerere was using the art of translation to carve a liberated zone - a meeting point between

intellectuals and their communities. Now, this is not an argument that the translation of Shakespearean plays is in itself necessarily a liberating act, but rather, that using it as a tool to defy colonial educational “borders” that separate English schooled *asomi* from their communities does create a liberated zone of sorts. When we speak of *asomi*, or at least some categories of them as professional parrots, we can say with certainty that in Mwalimu Nyerere, there was never a kasuku moment. When we read in Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* that colonised elites are “zombies” and “walking lies”, our eyes can never be on Julius Kambarage Nyerere.

Call: Asomi!...(Response)...

Am I telling the truth?...(Response)...

Dialogue Cycle 3: Grounding Basic Concepts...

Having paid homage to Mwalimu for the creation of such a variety of liberated zones, I would like to now focus on grounding the main concepts in my address and then round off in conclusion. Specifically, I want to ensure that I have not been speaking to myself talking of art and liberated zones. Similarly, I want to ascertain that we are all coming from the same point of departure as failure to do this could lead to an acrimonious dialogue. As the story of the “Blind Men and Elephant” cautions, a potentially productive conversation could easily turn into a quarrel due to a small, basic misunderstanding. You remember how the dear friends fell into a vicious argument as they disagreed about what an elephant looked like simply because they were situated at contradictory vantage points. Some versions of this orature narrative tell us that the argument got so extreme and irreconcilable that the men actually came to blows. Now, aware of the fact that we have a discussion after my delivery, I want to avoid the possibility of our coming to blows for no reason at all. So let’s see whether we can establish a common point of departure.

Call: Wananchi!... (Response)...

Are you napping?...(Response)...

Dialogue Cycle 4: In Praise of Art and Artists in Liberation Zones...

At the risk of walking you back over terrain you might have covered before, especially for those of you who are artists, or teachers, or students of orature and literature, I would like to revisit the enduring debate on the role of art and the artist in society as it is pertinent to the unravelling of our theme today. If you are a veteran in this regard, please feel free to take a short nap because I am likely to echo arguments you are already familiar with. Seriously, however, let us ask two basic questions. Why does art matter at all in liberation struggles? How can it possibly aid in either creating liberated zones or the flowering process?

To begin with, let me explain that I am speaking of art broadly: it is, at the most basic, an imaginative product created within a cultural context as the artist engages a given reality, or multiple realities, to re-imagine phenomena and/or experiences in life in order to give them new meaning. This, of course, is done through the use of a chosen medium of expression which becomes the tool for communication using: words (language), written and/or spoken; voice and sound; the human body; musical instruments; cloth; wood; clay; metal; string; paint; and the list could go on. The final result should be a creation that makes an aesthetic statement – positive or negative – and that communicates a message which is always value-laden, whether intentionally or otherwise. Unavoidably, then, creations such as stories, poems, novels, drama and theatre, artefacts, sculptures, dances, paintings, carvings and so on are but cultural statements that are imaginatively, artistically conceived. At its best, art attempts to capture either an ordinary or a special event in such a way that it invests the moment with layered meaning, profundity, and a magical uniqueness. Thus, art is a familiar or imagined reality, envisioned such that a new world emerges out of the vision. Art happens when the creator's imagination captures life's beat in such a way that dancing in rhythm with the outpouring of her/his soul, he/she is able to discover his/her authentic voice for articulating the profundity of the moment using verbal or written linguistic hypnotism to enthrall the audience. Good art should be a captivating tapestry of content

and form fully realised. This is true of orature, as it is of literature and any other art form.

Equally important to state is the fact that in the Pan- Africana world, critical as it is for art to be aesthetically appealing, it is also expected to be functional. The notion of art for art's sake which was popularised by the Bohemian tradition during the 19th century, in which an artist is viewed as transcending life, if you will, and as being alienated from his community, is foreign in Black art, especially orature. (For the record, however, let me quickly acknowledge Bohemian artists for rejecting bourgeois ideology). In orature, the artist does not create on his/her own, but with or on behalf of the community. Orature is also adamant that art should play an active role in society, often being created and used to mark the various milestones, seasons and significant events in the life of the community, including: birth, child-naming, initiation (in some societies), marriage, death, installation of rulers, communal rituals and so on.

Call: Wasafiri!...(Response)...

Are we still together?...(Response)...

Dialogue Cycle 5: Palaver on African Orature

I would like to take some time to zero in on African orature as an art form because in the Pan-African world and history, it has influenced the creation and flowering of liberated zones more than any other form of artistic expression. Perhaps I should open with a definition of orature for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the term. In doing so, I am going to draw heavily from the now famous paper, "Orature as a Skill and as a Tool for African Development," presented by Pio Zirimu and Austin Bukenya at FESTAC 77. Orature is the art of the spoken word, which Zirimu and Bukenya term "verbal art," describing it further as the highest form of "oracy in action" because orature compositions culminate in performance. This is the art form consumed by the majority of Black masses who are also its most consistent producers and who often create it in the process of production - observing daily, seasonal, ceremonial and other rhythms of life, such as cultivating fields, hunting, rowing boats,

pounding grain, rocking children to sleep, enacting rituals and many other activities. When Africans were taken into slavery in the Americas and the Caribbean islands, they not only utilised orature across the Middle Passage to resist and survive terror, but recreated it, emerging with new oratures that spoke to the realities they were encountering and wrestling with under enslavement. Song, dance, music, stories, myths, legends, proverbs, ritual incantations and oracy, in particular were the most commonly used genres in naming sites of trauma in the land of enslavement, just as they were used to communicate messages of resistance and hope that led to the carving out of liberated zones. The list of such orators is long, but a few names will suffice: David Walker, Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Nanny of the Maroons, Mary Prince, and Toussaint Louverture. Orature was instrumental in the evolution of what Carole Boyce-Davies has called “uprising discourses.” In this regard, orature becomes not just “verbal art” that culminates in performance, but a tool for self and collective liberation.

Call: Wenzangu!...(Response)...

Am I making sense?... (Response)...

In the orature tradition, then, the artist must be one with the ordinary people s/he lives among. He or she is supposed to know the community so well that s/he is able to instinctively feel its pulse and then find the voice and tone to articulate the feelings, needs and desires of the members, at the individual and collective levels. Likewise, the community is supposed to know the artist so closely that when s/he speaks they recognise their voices in what s/he says. In orature the idea of an artist who lives in isolation from society, or stands aloof above his or her people is unheard of. Such a posture would make the artist and his/her art promptly irrelevant. It is true that the artist, especially on attaining the rank of a community *griot*, is held in high regard as the transmitter of communal artistic culture, values and history; but he/she is never a stranger and s/he is never deified. Further, unlike the advocates of “art for art’s sake,” the orature artist does not apologise for using art to educate, enlighten, politicise, conscientise and even urge people to action. This might

explain why in the Black world and particularly during the first African liberation struggles, several political leaders were artists.

I want to suggest that the orature tradition is an indigenous site of knowledge and creativity that we need to return to frequently, researching it with seriousness in order to fully unearth its ethics and aesthetics. However, our *“Return to the Source”* also means going back critically – as opposed to doing so condescendingly or romantically and above all, exploitatively, for the sake of “harvesting” the brains of its artists on a mission to lengthen our curriculum vitae. Here, therefore, is yet another site waiting for full liberation. Artists can bring about its season of flowering.

Call: Asomi!...(Response)...

Do you harvest brains? ...(Response)...

Dialogue Cycle 6: Selected African Writers Imagining Liberated Zones...

Having celebrated orature and its place in the tasks of creating and pollinating liberated zones so that they can flower, it would be remiss of me not to recognise the way orate African artists have used their writing skills to create imaginative liberated zones. Let us highlight a number of them. Chinua Achebe, in his book of essays, *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, has a famous essay entitled, “The novelist as teacher” in which he argues that the novelist should play the role of teacher in recreating the worlds of dominated people that have been historically misrepresented, caricatured and even demonised by colonial stereotyping and misrepresentation. Specifically addressing the Nigerian/African scene which he sets out to validate, he mourns the inculcation of a culture of shame and self-hatred in colonised African minds that is done so effectively through education (what Carter G. Woodson would have called “miseducation”), in the colonial and currently, neo-colonial, classrooms. Achebe maintains that art and artists have a duty to conscientise such minds, especially young ones, teaching the “victims” to celebrate and affirm their worlds, rather than imitate Europe in search of validation. He urges the “victims” to look in their backyards that are teeming with befitting

subjects for poetry. Setting an example through his writing, he laces his narratives with illustrative gems from the Igbo culture, including myths, legends, ceremonies, sayings, stories, proverbs and so on, to evoke a Nigerian/African reality, thus creating a literary liberated zone for us. He becomes an authentic “child of two worlds” (to borrow from Mugo wa Gatheru’s book title): *The Written and the Orate*.

As I have argued, African orature has its backward moments - as do all other artistic heritages - but this does not call for abdication or abandonment. What is needed is the creation of liberated zones in this body of precious creativity with a view to making it flower. As already intimated, orature has served as a liberation tool for people of African origin during historical crises, such as slavery and colonisation. It is this liberating power of verbal, written and other forms of art that leads Tsitsi Ndangarembga, the Zimbabwean writer, to say in *Talking with African Writers* that she writes to stay alive. Today women survivors of rape in the Congo are using orature to assert themselves and reclaim their lives, singing, dancing and telling stories to “talk back” at their violators. The words of a song I once heard the women sing in a documentary film are imprinted in my memory: something to the effect that the rapists may violate and tear their bodies apart, but will never touch their soul. These survivors of rape are using orature to come together as a community in order to name and articulate their pain, defiance and determination to move on despite the traumas they have been through - for them, art is a tool in the difficult journey towards healing. Within a Pan-Africana context, reminding ourselves that art has healing and liberating power is critical. The case is so artistically articulated by Ayi Kwei Armah in his novel *The Healers* that saying more on my part would be redundant, except to note the fact that in the book, healers are depicted as artists while characters who are artistically inclined, such as Denso and Ajoa, are attracted to healing as a vocation.

Because art and artists have healing power, they are obligated to cultivate and nurture visions that inspire human beings to not only reach their highest potential, but strive to humanise the world they live in. They are expected to use the power of creativity to expose negative forces in life, including oppression, dehumanisation and other

injustices – systemic, social, political, economic, spiritual, etc. Wole Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel Laureate in literature and first laureate of the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Distinguished Lectureship, makes the case powerfully and compellingly in his prison autobiographical work, *The Man Died*. Many of us are familiar with the most frequently quoted line, echoing the book title, reminding us that 'the man dies in each one of us who keeps silent in the face of tyranny' - add to the list: injustice, oppression, exploitation, enslavement, domination... The lead-line and book title economically ground the point I am belabouring about the challenging responsibility art and artists have in the liberation process. For taking this charge seriously, Soyinka-type artists who speak truth to power, as the saying goes, have landed in prison while others have actually been killed for it. Today as we look at the role of art and artists in creating and facilitating flowering in Pan Africana liberated zones, let us remember that it is our duty to continue this tradition of resistance, whatever the cost.

Call: Abantu!...(Response)...

Shall I go on?... (Response)...

Silence, silencing, and the inculcation of amnesia are the other concerns we need to address because they are antithetical to the creation and flowering of liberated zones. Among the most resounding themes in the writing of Ama Ata Aidoo, the celebrated African woman writer from Ghana, is the need for colonised people to purge themselves of what she calls "self-imposed amnesia." Her works and in particular *Anowa*, are insistent on making us remember the trauma and holocaust experienced under slavery; but more so, they force us to confront the harsh, painful truth that some African profiteers and collaborators participated in the sale of our people into bondage. I posit that to purposefully participate in the process of carving liberated zones and helping them flower, artists cannot afford to bury indicting history. Ama Ata Aidoo is fulfilling the task that James Baldwin, the legendary African American author, associates with writers and writing in *Notes of a Native Son* where he speaks of the need to "squeeze every drop of meaning from experiences whether bitter or sweet." We can never succeed in running away from history,

however painful or controversial it happens to be, because as the saying goes, it has a way of catching up with us.

Call: Wananchi?... (Response)...

Are you still there?... (Response)...

Okello Oculi, a Ugandan poet and political scientist (the latter by default, I have teased him, because he is such a gifted artist), has expounded this theme of silence, silencing and self-silencing by urging us to view “exploding silence” as a primary task for artists. Oculi is right, for, meaningful “utterance” of the word is liberating. Although I have expanded on his metaphor in the introduction to *My Mother’s Poem and Other Songs* by suggesting that whereas imposed silence is negative, self-chosen silence is, or can be, positive, I am in general agreement that exploding silence is central if art is to help create liberated zones. This is especially the case when art is understood in terms of orature ethics and aesthetics as established earlier on.

A question that is related to the themes of silence/silencing and their antitheses, utterance and self-articulation, is the language the artist is to use in order to give art the agency to hasten the creation and flowering of liberated zones. Among other artists, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o has perhaps spent more time than any other writer to address the issue of language, especially in *Decolonising the Mind* where he makes a compelling case for writing in our own mother tongues. Chinua Achebe, on the other hand, has argued that the writer should direct his/her energies to “twisting and bending” colonial languages, making them do what he/she wants. Another perspective is by Nourbese Philip in her amazingly insightful piece, *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks*, a collection of poetry. This innovative writer of Caribbean origin – born in Trinidad and Tobago, but also a citizen of Canada – engenders the debate by describing English as her “Father tongue” which she shows as being in perpetual tension with her “Mother tongue,” meaning her language of self-naming as a Black African female writer. In jazz-like manner she manipulates and twists the English language, which she must use, to pose the complexity, dilemma, tension and anguish that accompany the challenge of interrogating this foreign “Father tongue,” whose silencing must be brought to a stop. Building

onto Philip's brilliant intervention and coming from a formerly colonial background, I would pose an additional complication by pointing out that some members of current young generations who have grown up in urban areas, away from the cultural locales of their mother tongues, have been forced to grow up using a second tongue. Luckily for some of them, this second language is an African tongue. A good case in point is Tanzania where Kiswahili is a national language. However, in some countries, there is no second African tongue to fall back on for urbanites that have lost their mother tongues – meaning their parents' first languages – and so they are forced to use a foreign tongue as their first language. In other words, they are caught up in a historical cross-fire that is none of their own making. In this situation, I would argue, their use of English under the understanding spelt out by Chinua Achebe and Nourbese Philip, is a critical way of avoiding self-censorship. With a progressive, revolutionary vision what they write can become a tool in the creation of liberated zones, complementing creative efforts composed in mother tongues. I would argue, further, that reactionary or backward writing in African mother tongues would be a hindrance to the creation of liberated zones.

Call: Wenzangu!...(Response)...

Shall I move on?...(Response)...

Dialogue Cycle 7: Highlights on Liberated Zones...

It is now time to expound on the central concept of “liberated zones,” which I have evoked such a great deal all through this address that its meaning should be evident by now; but I am determined to avoid the fate of the elusive proverbial elephant and quarrelling blind men. In the Pan-Africana world, the legacy of “liberated zones” stretches a long way back in the history of struggle against slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. Historically and in physical terms, it refers to areas that enslaved and colonised Africans actually seized from “invaders” or occupational forces, either through armed struggle and bloodshed, or through organised sit-ins and demonstrations. The latter were a common occurrence at the height of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the United States

of America. Freedom fighters and activists would transform spaces they had taken from “the enemy,” creating new models of social institutions and communities, with the aim of evolving alternatives to the exploitative, oppressive systems they had overthrown or were seeking to replace. Thus the freedom fighters redefined themselves in their own terms, as it were, determined to rid themselves of enslaving/colonising ideas and practices that had been socialised into them by “the enemy..”. In these recovered spaces, education and artistic expression had a very central place as tools for self-naming, intellectual growth, conscientisation and cultivation of the kind of agency that would lead to the birth of new people and new societies.

Call: Wasafiri!...(Response)...

Are we together?... (Response)...

Let us travel back in history in order to highlight a few selected sites that demonstrate the creation of liberated zones. Arguably, the earliest classical example is present day Angola during the reign of Queen Ana Sousa Nzinga Mbande of Ndongo and Matamba, the monarch of the Mbundu people. She lived from 1583-1663 and reigned for a large portion of the 17th Century. Queen Nzinga waged a fierce, protracted war against the Portuguese and succeeded in recapturing important territories that they used for trafficking captured Africans into slavery. She then declared the areas she had liberated free zones, to which any enslaved person could escape and live as a free person. Surprisingly, scholarship has not said much about this space as, arguably, the earliest Pan African site on historical record, created through a deliberate administrative “policy” (Nzinga’s declaration). I have also argued that a case could be made for considering Nzinga as the first “slave” abolitionist. Queen Nzinga was famous not just for her military, administrative and diplomatic deftness, but for her powerful skills in oracy. She is even said to have been involved in political negotiations with the Pope. As if determined to honour Nzinga’s legacy, enslaved Africans who survived the Middle Passage and made it to the plantations in the Caribbean and the Americas, pushed the tradition of creating liberated zones to new levels. They would escape and establish “free slave zones,” then build permanent

settlements establishing structures, systems and institutions of their own. From these new spaces they would attack their enslavers and at times succeed in seizing even more territory.

Call: Asomi!...(Response)...

Were you taught this?...(Response)...

A good example of this is Jamaica, where self-freed former “slaves” established flourishing *maroon* communities, mostly up in the Blue Mountains during the 17th and 18th centuries. Communities that constituted Leeward Maroons had a central leader whereas those of the Windward Maroons operated as a federation under one leader. The famous woman leader known as Nanny of the Maroons was one of their leaders. By the way, the stories of towering herstorical figures such as Queen Anne Nzinga and Nanny of the Maroons during slavery should make us embarrassed about the silence around women’s leadership in history. Under Nanny and other leaders, the maroons waged such a formidable war against their British enslavers that by 1739 the occupiers had conceded defeat, ending what has come to be historically known as the First Maroon War. Up to this day descendants of maroon societies still maintain a very active resistance culture against neo-colonialism, capitalism and imperialism in Jamaica. Indeed, the Rastafari movement that later arose in the island during the 1930s was greatly inspired by the maroon tradition. Music and other art forms were concomitant agents in creating these “liberated zones” and it is this legacy that later gave the world a legend such as Bob Marley whose music influenced sites of liberation struggles in the whole Caribbean region, the Americas, Africa and the world at large. In South America, *quilombos* and *quilombo* communities were the equivalent of maroon societies in the Caribbean and they too have always had strong linkage to the arts, especially the art of oracy in ritual enactment as well as in political mobilisation, drumming and dance.

Call: Abantu!...(Response)...

Are you with me?...(Response)...

The best known and most successful story of resistance and the creation of a liberated zone that actually led to the evolution of

the first Black nation by formerly enslaved people is current day Haiti, which was originally known as St. Domingue. The story of independent Haiti began with the establishment of liberated zones by maroon communities. They eventually unified under the leadership of Francois Mackandal, a voodoo priest who was an expert in the art of divination and who was grounded in oracy skills associated with voodoo rituals. Mackandal was critical in effecting the unification of maroon communities on the island, organising them expertly for resistance against French colonialism. This led to the protracted Haitian revolution of 1791-1804 that saw the founding of the first Black state in the history of the Caribbean and the Americas.

Moving fast-forward, the tradition spread across historical time right up to the period of the Civil Rights Movement in America and later, to the advent of liberation struggles for independence on the African continent. During the Civil Rights Struggle, demonstrators would occupy buildings belonging to the administration and declare them “liberated zones.”. More often than not this would lead to the power structures conceding to negotiate over demands from the demonstrators. Once space was “liberated,” the occupiers would establish nurseries, schools, and food kitchens for the poor in an attempt to create democratic paradigms that would stand as alternatives to existing capitalistic institutions. The Black Power Movement was well-known for this and many autobiographies of the time - including those of Angela Davis and Assata Shakur - talk about these liberated zones. Some of those experiments were amazing success stories.

On the African continent, liberated zones were mainly associated with armed struggles for independence. For instance in Kenya, the Mau Mau Land Freedom Army took to the forests of Mount Kenya and the Nyandarua mountain ridge, right in the heart of the former so-called “White Highlands” where Africans were not allowed to step unless they had permits. In those mountains they created “homes” and communities of their own, as well as a democratic system of government that even had a parliament. The liberated zones they created survived British occupational forces for slightly over a decade, from 1952 to around 1963 when the last of the Mau

Mau generals left the forests at the advent of internal independence. Throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s, combatants in so-called Lusophone Africa - Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea Bissau in particular - perfected skills in establishing liberated zones. In all these cases the role of art, artists, and culture cannot be sufficiently emphasised: they were the heart and soul of the revolutions.

Call: Asomi!...(Response)...

Need I say more?... (Response)...

Discourse on liberated zones would be incomplete if we did not emphasise the danger of mental and psychological colonisation and enslavement. We must never forget that dominating cultures use their institutions of the superstructure to indoctrinate the oppressed and in this manner create disciples who will slavishly service their economic base. Thus education, media, law, religion, and other institutions of the superstructure are just as important areas of/for occupation and liberation as land is. A lot of scholars and theoreticians have analysed the damage that mental enslavement can cause among the dominated, Mwalimu Nyerere being among them. The question that I, therefore, wish to pose is: - are our minds liberated zones or occupied territories? What new paradigms and theories are we as African intellectuals coming up with that can sit at the international conference tables as viable alternatives to imperialist and Western-imposed “models?”? If we were to answer these questions honestly, we would have to admit that intellectuals, who once produced ideas which were innovative, progressive and homegrown, seem to be very few in numbers these days. The majority of today’s scholars seem to be too busy perfecting incomprehensible modernist jargon and tired, recycled, Western theories to become inventors. I posit that our minds need to become the primary “liberated zones” we should aim at securing, otherwise we will not have the ability or the imagination to create viable literal ones.

The foregoing, hopefully, establishes the significance of liberated zones in the history of struggle among people of African origin, as well as, of course, that of other historically oppressed and dominated people globally. I have often argued that liberated zones

during Africa's struggle for independence and what happened there represented some of the highest moments in the history of the African continent and its diaspora. The liberated zones gave us a glimpse of what the Black world was capable of achieving and becoming when inspired by imaginations that were free from imitation. Working in collaboration with their people, African leaders came up with liberating theories and practices that emphasised self-determination and embraced a collective vision which was necessary for ushering in a future with hope. Those zones were high potential for Africa's historical flowering. The leaders even understood the imperative of integrating women and youth into their development agenda. Those of us who witnessed this potential for carving an alternative path in human development during those days of hope should be forgiven for feeling nostalgic about the missed possibilities. Guinea Bissau under Amilcar Cabral and Mozambique under Samora Machel were unforgettable beacons of hope.

Call: Asomi!...(Response)...

Are you with me?...(Response)...

Dialogue Cycle 8: Special Spotlight on Orature as a “Return to the Source!”...

Let us go back, crab-wise, to our discussion on verbal art. Earlier on I mentioned the critical intervention Pio Zirimu and Austin Bukenya made at the colloquium during FESTAC 77. However, it is important to point out that even though it was Zirimu and Bukenya who popularised and theorised best on “orature,” the term was actually coined in the corridors of the universities of Makerere, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars were so creative and audacious that they dared to challenge existing colonial definitions and come up with coinages of their own. For instance, they contended the term “Oral Literature” which, by turning “Orature” into adjective compromised its rightful status as a subject in its own right. They debated the issue and came to the conclusion that in Latin, “litera-ture” described the written tradition and hence coined the term “ora-ture” to describe the spoken heritage.

They then turned to African indigenous knowledges in an effort to identify ethics and aesthetics that informed this independent art form. Thus, for them and for me, to speak of “Oral Literature” becomes a contradiction in terms. Orature as area of study has become a liberated zone in academia and in the last few decades it has grown so much as site of knowledge that it is being taught all over the world. The progressive African scholars who created this new site of knowledge understood Amilcar Cabral’s call for “returning to the source” which he theorises about with great clarity in his work *Return to the Source*. Coincidentally, I see that Professor Shivji has circulated some materials on *Return to the Source* and all I can say is that telepathy must have been at work because we had not plotted to bring Cabral back “home” today. I say “home” because Issa Shivji was preparing materials on Cabral from Dar es Salaam, a place he (Cabral) called home; while I was preparing my address from Syracuse, the site at which Cabral first delivered his lecture on “*Return to the Source*” on February 20, 1970 – later published in book form. As you may be aware, Cabral’s lecture was in honour of Mozambican leader, Eduardo Mondlane, who had worked as an Assistant Professor at Syracuse University until 1963 and who was assassinated in Dar es Salaam in 1969. What incredible, symbolic, historical ironies, coincidences and intersections!

At any rate, for me over the years Cabral’s *Return to the Source* has been like a manifesto. I have read, studied and taught it so often that I almost know it by heart. This monumental work, thin in size as it is, will always remain a classic. Like Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, it is a prophetic work that one has to keep coming back to because its relevance spans across time endlessly. In *Return to the Source*, Amilcar Cabral rightly emphasises the centrality of culture in the liberation process, clearly showing that they are intertwined. Culture, he argues, is produced as people relate to their productive process in order to fulfil, at the very least, their basic needs in life. He also asserts that ‘the river of culture never stops flowing among the masses.’ Thus it makes sense that culture is an indispensable tool in the liberation of a dominated society’s economic base. It is for this reason that Cabral insists that

liberation is the highest moment in the history of resistance against domination. Since language and art are indispensable aspects of culture, given that they are its tools of articulation, expression and communication; it follows that they are absolutely essential for the creation of liberated zones and for their flowering. The reason colonisers repress, demonise and systematically destroy the cultures of colonised peoples is because in so doing, they are also able to destroy colonised people's identity, history and memory, to mention the most obvious. As Cabral maintains, therefore, liberation struggles are, characteristically, preceded by an increase in cultural activism. It is critical to add that Cabral is assuming that this cultural activism is progressive, the same way as his "*Return to the Source*" project has to be if it is to create authentic and enduring liberated zones.

Call: UDS!...(Response)...

Am I talking sense?...(Response)...

Dialogue Cycle 9: Illustrative Details...

I will now gradually and reluctantly make my way to the exit, which you are probably relieved to see me do, by highlighting a few selected examples to demonstrate the validity of Cabral's theorising that heightened cultural production and activism always precede the liberation process. To add to this I would reiterate that without culture, liberated spaces cannot bloom or come to flowering.

Allow me to take you back to the history of slavery again in which defiant Africans used music, songs, drama, storytelling, dance, drumming, drawings, sculptures, murals, and other artistic forms to rebel, agitate, communicate, educate and claim freedom. Through art they created both metaphorical and tangible liberated spaces. Indeed, works of art such as *Classic Slave Narratives*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and other texts like them, constituted the major testimony presented by abolitionists to campaign for the end of slavery. We do well to remember that most of these works were first created as verbal art, as orature.

During the Civil Rights Movement in the United States there was a blooming of art in the form of literature, the spoken word,

performed arts, murals, painting, jazz and so forth that were used for mobilisation, conscientisation, transformation of both individuals and communities as well as for envisioning a new future. Similar artistic productivity characterised most liberation struggles that I can think of on the African continent in countries such as Algeria, Kenya, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau and Zimbabwe. A good illustration is a beautiful collection of poetry edited by Margaret Dickinson coming out of liberation struggles in Mozambique and Angola, entitled *When Bullets Begin to Flower*. It has poetry and songs from ordinary people, professional artists and the leaders of the liberation struggle movements themselves, among them Agostinho Neto and Marcelino dos Santos. Many of the pieces are “orature in writing.” At those sites of war, where enemy bullets were killing people, artists were creating new life and new hope through their artistic statements as they composed alternative “stories” affirming life and speaking of liberation. Maina wa Kinyatti has another captivating title of a work on songs from the Mau Mau armed struggle in Kenya: *Thunder from the Mountains*, which the cadres composed and sang in the forests, in the countryside and other liberated zones, defying the silencing terror of British occupational forces during the Emergency. South in Zimbabwe, Alec J.C. Pongweni was to later edit a collection that bears an even more assertive title on the role played by art in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle: *Songs that Won the Liberation War*. Like its counterpart, *When Bullets Begin to Flower*, contributors include ordinary *wananchi*, regular freedom fighters but also their leaders, including one of the top brass then, former President Canaan Banana. It is important to note here that song, music and dance were so important in the Zimbabwean liberation that the nation invited Bob Marley of Jamaica as the performing guest of honour at the independence celebrations on April 18, 1980.

I want to spend a moment on independent Zimbabwe because I was a first hand witness of the work that art and artists had embarked on at the time to ensure that their liberated zone (nation) would eventually arrive at flowering. Those first few years

of Zimbabwe's independence were truly exciting: there was hope, optimism and so much positive energy that they were contagious. Some of the biggest projects undertaken had to do with the promotion of culture. Seminars, workshops, displays, performances, symposiums, book fairs and conferences, on culture and art were commonplace occurrences. Literacy campaigns and community theatre performances were thriving and flowering. Indeed all the arts mushroomed and flowered across the new republic in the form of sculptures, paintings, music, carvings, weaving, the spoken word, creative writing...just name it. What is more, the government financed most of them. It is tragic that this revolutionary spirit was so short-lived, but this is not the place to explore what went wrong.

Call: Wananchi! ...(Response)...

Are you asleep? ...(Response)...

In South Africa, as we all know, the workers, people and youth used song, oracy, orature recitations, poetry, drama and performance, the spoken word, the *toi toi* and gum boot dances, etc., to mobilise as well as energise their communities for the struggle against apartheid. All these art forms would leave powerful, lasting images imprinted in people's minds, globally. The songs and music of Miriam Makeba Pan Africanised and internationalised the anti-apartheid liberation struggle, reaching not just the world's dance floors, but all corners of the globe. Dennis Brutus used his poetry, including some written from prison, to galvanise the boycott of sports under apartheid. Winnie Mandela's *A Part of my Soul Went with Him* was a midnight call entreating the world not to forget that Nelson Mandela and his comrades were locked up under hard labour in Robben Island. Ellen Kuzwayo's autobiography, *Call Me Woman*, reminded Africa and the international community that women were a vital part of the struggle that sought to turn apartheid South Africa into a liberated zone while situating education, culture and art at the centre of this process.

Dialogue Cycle 10: Mwalimu and the Flowering of Liberated Zones ...

Right here in Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the republic's founding president and the icon we are celebrating this week, was very clear about the need to nurture culture and the arts and to integrate them in education. Like Cabral, he advocated for a "*Return to the Source*" and for dialogue with the masses if Africa was serious about liberating her culture and art from foreign grip. Mwalimu was known for "walking the walk" to borrow from an African American expression. He created spaces for artists to produce art and for art to thrive. His speeches, especially at the inception of national independence, revisited the question of culture time and again. Mwalimu was fascinated by creativity and he was a creator himself, especially through translation and poetry. He was enthralled by artistic performance. I believe that under Nyerere's Presidency, Tanzania must have been the first country in independent Africa to introduce music, culture, fine art and the performing arts as examinable subjects in the school system, at the primary and secondary school levels. A great deal has been written about Mwalimu and his love for the arts. Scholars who have done research in this area include my long-time friends, Professors Amandina Lihamba and Penina Mlama. So, I will not dwell on it. I only need to observe that it is most befitting that Tanzania named *Nyumba ya Sanaa*, a cultural national monument, the Julius Nyerere Cultural Centre. After more than four decades, alas, I am told that beautiful monument is being replaced by a monstrous monument to neo-liberalism.

So, this week we celebrate the legacy of this great son of Tanzania and Africa, but as we do so I would like us to ask ourselves: what are we doing to keep his legacy alive? You see, we have become experts at celebrating, drinking and feasting under the cover of remembering and commemorating history's heroes and sheroes. But the question is: what are we doing to uphold their legacies, let alone create new ones? After all, this is the land of the Maji Maji rebellion which Ebrahim Hussein has so brilliantly evoked in his famous drama piece *Kinjeketile*, reminding us that Tanzania has a rich history of

resistance. Resistance culture and art are not an option, they are a must. In Tanzania, Africa and “Global Africa” (the Black World internationally) art and culture have been historically used to fight and overthrow systems of oppression, including slavery, colonialism and imperialism at large. Today they are just as needed to combat neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism. In this corporate, neo-liberal economy of the 21st century, liberated zones are more urgently needed than they ever were. If we ignore the role of culture and the arts, my friends, we will have lost a major weapon in completing this mandatory mission. We will have lost Mwalimu’s vision. Personally, I want to celebrate and embrace him, not only for being an exceptional leader, but also as an Africana “poet philosopher” who dedicated his life to the creation and flowering of Pan- Africana liberated zones.

Call: Abantu!...(Response)...

Will you celebrate with me? (Response)...

Exit Point

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Rwekaza Mukandala, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Professorial Chair in Pan- African Studies, Issa Shivji; the entire University of Dar es Salaam; revered guests; valued members of the community at large...once again, please accept my deep appreciation for this historical honour.

Vote of Thanks for Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo

A Fighter Through and Through By M.M. Mulokozi

Let me begin by expressing my thanks to the organisers of this event for giving me the honour of delivering the vote of thanks for our distinguished comrade lecturer of today. I have never been a praise singer, but it seems today I will have to become one because, however hard I try, I am unable to find fault with the well thought-out and well-delivered talk by our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer, Prof. Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo.

If my memory serves me right, I first heard about Mĩcere Mũgo in the late 1970s. At that time Kenya was in turmoil, the Moi dictatorship was consolidating itself, and many writers and intellectuals were either going to prison or into exile. Mĩcere was one of the leading fighters in the struggle for democracy and human rights being waged by Kenyans then. As a poet, militant feminist and human rights activist, she spoke for the millions of Kenyans, women and men, who were groaning under the Moi yoke. That was thirty years ago. To my amazement, when I saw and heard Mĩcere today, I realised that she has not changed – neither physically nor ideologically. As someone said elsewhere, she has remained forever young!

When I first met her in print, Mĩcere Mũgo was, like her compatriots Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Abdilatif Abdalla, being hounded by the Kenyan establishment, and was soon to go into exile in Zimbabwe and eventually North America. As she succinctly expressed in one of her poems:

*For many who are home
have jail
for home
Thousands who are home
have streets
for home*

*Millions who are home
are crying
for home.*

In other words, one can be home without necessarily being at home, as so many African working people, and quite a few of our committed intellectuals, have learned in the course of 50 years of our “independence.”

Professor Mĩcere Mũgo, your lifelong work has been an attempt to forge a link between literature and orature, and three levels of political struggle, namely:

- Pan-Africanism and Black struggle
- Class struggle, and
- Feminism, particular African feminism and the Black woman’s struggle

You have done this through your poetry, drama, and other creative writings, through your scholarly work and lectures, and through your activism and social and political action.

As a Black Woman, you discovered that your colour and gender placed you on the lowest rung of the oppressed. You came to realise that the three K’s that some German scholars regard as denoting the oppression of woman – i.e., *Kirch*, *Kuche*, and *Kinder* [church, kitchen and children] – do not exhaust the agencies of woman oppression; that one should add a fourth letter – a “P” for *Politik* [politics]. Your outstanding poem titled “Mother Afrika’s Matriots” says it all.

Comrade Mĩcere, it is not possible for me to summarise your lecture, and I will not attempt to do that, for your talk was not only a speech but a performance, and one cannot summarise a performance. I can only say briefly that your talk today has reminded us that literature, orature and existential realities should not be separated, for they form an organic and inseparable whole. Indeed, you have highlighted the fact that nationalism, pan-Africanism, and human rights struggles should be waged alongside militant feminism, for no liberation can be complete without the liberation of woman.

Madam Comrade Mũgo, Tanzania has come a long way since the 1960s. In those days Tanzania was proud to host the likes of Mondlane, Samora Machel, Che Guevara, Mahmoud Mamdani,

Gora Ibrahim, Frene Ginwalla, Abdilatif Abdalla, Walter Rodney, Miriam Makeba, Angela Davis, John Garang, Yoweri Museveni and Kanyama Chiume – to name only a few of the progressives of the day who found a welcoming home in Tanzania. Today, Tanzania is proud to host the likes of George Bush Jr. when they are being hounded by European liberals!

That today we are hosting you and Abdilatif Abdalla, and two years ago we hosted Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, is not accidental; on the contrary, it is proof that the struggles you waged in Kenya in the seventies and eighties were not in vain; that you, Ngũgĩ and Abdilatif, as fighters forged in those struggles, have a lot to teach us; and indeed, we in Tanzania have a lot to learn from your Kenyan experience.

We thank you deeply for being a true role model for us to emulate. We thank you for giving us another chance to host a true hero of the people, and a true heroine of women and men in Africa and elsewhere. We thank you for your inspiring and enlightening words, and for your enchanting artistic delivery. We thank you for remaining young.

Finally, we thank the members of your team, including your family and friends, who accompanied you all the way from Nairobi to Dar es Salaam. We wish you all a safe return to your homes. In your case, we also wish you a safe return to your adopted home in the Diaspora, and hope that you will one day find a more real, more fulfilling home.

M.M. Mulokozi

Thandika Mkandawire

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Distinguished Lecturer, 2013

**Fifty Years of African Independence:
Personal Reflections**

Professor Thandika Mkandawire

Citation Read by Professor Issa Shivji

Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, Ambassador Fulgence Kazaura, Vice-Chancellor Professor Rwekaza Mukandala, our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer-designate, Prof. Thandika Mkandawire, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me start with a word of welcome to all our guests. I would like to extend a special welcome to our guests from outside the country and from outside the continent. You will have time to meet, hear and interact with them. Vijana, exploit them fully – I mean intellectually.

Now, to the citation:

I have learnt two things from Thandika - watching good movies and operating a printer!

Having missed my flight, I was staying with Thandika in Dakar, Senegal, where he spent almost two decades of his 'exile'. Invariably, Thandika would be rushing to the office in the morning. Invariably he would skip his breakfast. When I woke up, instead of bread on the dining table, I would always find a carefully selected DVD, which, I must confess, I enjoyed watching so much that I forgot all about breakfast. That was a display of Thandika's characteristic wit, with a characteristic message: Issa, man doesn't live by bread alone! He was commenting on my artistic primitiveness!

Our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer-designate has a subtle but telling sense of humour, playful on the surface, profound in its message. And he has often deployed that humour in defense of African scholars who have been the butt of Western Africanists' mediocre criticism and sarcasm. I suggest you read such articles by him as 'Neopatrimonialism', 'Running while others walk' which was his inaugural professorial lecture at the London School of Economics, and a brilliant essay titled 'The Intellectual Itinerary of Jeffrey Sachs'.

Now you would know, or ought to know, that Jeffrey Sachs is a 'poverty-reduction' Band-Aid guru who can move smoothly in such

diametrically opposed forums as Davos and the World Social Forum, or mixes with such celebrities as George Soros, Tony Blair and Bob Geldof, meanwhile receiving red-carpet treatment in the state houses of Africa, having just visited poverty stricken urban ghettos. In that review of Sachs' book, Thandika takes the reader effortlessly through Sachs' acrobatics, intellectually undressing the author of *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make it Happen in Our Lifetime* (2005). By the time we are through, the author of the book has been stripped "naked", without, perhaps even the author realizing it! That is our Thandika Mkandawire.

There is another passion with which Thandika Mkandawire is obsessed, and, rightly so – the role and place of higher education in Africa. In 1986, the World Bank decided that Africa had no need to think for herself because 'rates of return' on tertiary education were lower than on primary education! Therefore, we were advised to concentrate on primary education while 'contracting out' thinking to Western consultants and universities. And our servile politicians followed the diktat. We undermined our universities. Our faculty began to migrate; some to greener pastures in the South of Africa, where they are still wondering whether they are of, and in Africa, or of Europe in Africa. Others migrated to the North of the continent to join the Diaspora. The result - we lost two decades of higher education as our universities fell from grace in every respect and the quality and rigor of university education tumbled drastically. Of course, the context was the Reaganomics of neo-liberalism rammed down our throats. As Thandika argues, where industrial and related development was thwarted by the nostrums received from the International Financial Institutions and erstwhile "donors", there was no need for education. There was no need for engineers, administrators, lawyers, social scientists etc. because the focus on stabilization and debt repayment or poverty reduction did not require profound skills. To quote Thandika:

Key policies could be managed remotely from Washington, London or Paris with the help of a few economists in the Ministry of Finance and the central bank or, as in the aborted Kenya experiment, by highly paid 'Dream Teams'

composed of Africans seconded from international financial institutions. Capacity building would be confined to meeting the needs of these foreign dominated programmes. Hence the huge investment in training African economists in the skills required for macroeconomic management even as universities were being run down.

The reduction of the development agenda to 'poverty reduction' did not help matters especially when it was assumed that 'pro-poor' policies were those that directly benefited the poor. One should recall here how the campaign for "Education for All" was turned against university education. If earlier arguments against education were based on efficiency grounds (the 'rate of return' argument) the new ones were based on equity considerations in which primary education is 'pro-poor' and tertiary education is elitist.

Now, the World Bank and its ilk have re-discovered that knowledge after all does matter in development. As Thandika says, the bank has reinvented itself as 'knowledge bank'. Thandika intones,

Unfortunately, the 'knowledge' referred to is quite specific and related more to managerial and developmental concerns, often around notions of 'Best Practice'. In fact what these agencies were concerned with was managing and disseminating the knowledge that they claimed they already had. ... What they were effectively saying was not simply 'If we only knew what we know' but to the African 'if you only knew what we know'.

In effect, they are telling us that they know what we don't know; and that do not have the capacity to know what they know; ergo, they must build our capacities to know what they know.

Thandika has a telling anecdote about this newly discovered wisdom of the World Bank that knowledge does matter in development,

Not long ago I participated in a panel at which the World Bank report on youth was presented by an official from the Bank. The report argued for more investment in youth if Africa was to develop. I asked the official how this could

be reconciled by the position held by the Bank on the low rates of investment directed at education for that age group - secondary and tertiary education. There was a sigh of disbelief in the room as the official responded that there had been an error in calculations.

I shall not go on quoting Thandika because it is infectious – you get carried away. Inakuleweshu!

Let me end with one final note. At the beginning, I made a reference to Thandika's 'exile'. Thandika is from Malawi. He was active in the Malawi African Congress under the reign of Kamuzu Hastings Banda. At a very young age he fell out with Banda and had to go into exile. I believe he was 22 or 23 at the time. I first met Thandika in mid-70s in Dakar, then again in Harare in the late 70s and since then many times over. But it was only many years later that I discovered that Thandika Mkandawire is from Malawi. It never occurred to me to ask him or our mutual friends as to Thandika's country. For Thandika the whole continent is his country, so much so that the question of his geographical origin never arises. He is an African first, an African last and an African always. The pan-African spirit resides in him and that is what he brings to this Festival.

In his usual style, Thandika pillories these state-lets of ours, or, as Mwalimu used to say: vinchi. In this spirit, I will share with you a light-hearted conversation between Thandika and me when I was sounding him out for this lecture.

Thandika: Given the border conflict between our countries how can I be sure you guys won't take me hostage in exchange for oil from the lake?

Issa: Hunh! Very thoughtful question! Wear white all through, ok?

Thandika: Great advice if the White is not interpreted as either surrender or Taliban uniform.

Issa: No, not surrender, a bearer of peace, a euphemism for surrender!

Our distinguished guests, members of the African intellectual community, and my colleagues, I have great pleasure to present to you our Distinguished Nyerere Lecturer for 2013, Thandika Mkandawire.

Fifty years of African Independence

Personal Reflections³

I am deeply honoured by the invitation to deliver the lecture named after a man who I deeply respected for his wisdom, his integrity, his commitment to the liberation of the continent, and for posing some of the most important questions we still have to address. As evidence of the influence the man had on my thinking I can refer to the fact that I took the title of my Inaugural Lecture at the London School of Economics from Mwalimu Julius Nyerere: 'Africa Must Run While Others Walk'.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the organisers of this event and to encourage them to keep the flag of intellectual debate and intellectual engagement in Africa flying high. Special thanks must go to Professor Issa Shivji, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Research Chair in Pan-African Studies of the University of Dar es Salaam, for his intellectual leadership.

On a recent visit to Cape Town I was driven to the airport in a minibus hired by the conference organisers to ferry guests around. The crew of the bus consisted of a driver and a hostess in her early twenties. We immediately began talking and I asked the young lady what she thought had changed since the end of apartheid. She replied that she really didn't know since she was only three when Mandela was released but that she suspected a lot had happened, considering what she had heard from her parents about how horrible and humiliating things were under apartheid. She immediately switched the subject to her main concern, which was getting a job as an air hostess at Emirates Airlines. She wanted to know if I knew how one gets a job as an air hostess, especially with Emirates. I confessed complete ignorance of the procedure.

3 The lecture liberally draws on some of my earlier writings and lectures.

The driver, clearly taken aback by the nonchalant way the young lady had addressed the weighty issue of apartheid, launched an animated tirade against young black South Africans for their lack of knowledge about the great sacrifices made by Mandela and many others for the freedom they now enjoyed, and against their taking their privileges for granted. Her English betrayed the fact that she had attended a privileged school, meaning a formerly exclusively White school. He then said something about how people like her who speak English with a 'European' accent looked down on people like him. After the most perfunctory excuse about her ignorance about the struggle, she returned to the issue that was close to her mind: did I know any people in the airline industry, especially in Emirates? The driver visibly took great pains to control himself and sulked all the way to the airport. This incident tells us about how much change can occur in a very short period of time and what social differentiation can emerge so quickly. For indeed, a lot has happened in the fifty years since independence and my brief today is to say something about those years from what will be an obviously idiosyncratic perspective. I am from a generation which grew up towards the end of colonial rule and witnessed the humiliation of the colonial order; parts of the struggle for independence; the exhilarating moment of the attainment of independence; the dark period of authoritarian rule and the dogmatically induced 'Lost Decade' of structural adjustment; the 'Second Independence' of democratisation; Africa's 'recovery' and rapid growth, etc.

Like the driver in Cape Town, I too am frustrated by the ignorance of the young generation of the colonial roots of their condition and the struggle for independence. And yet, I am also proud when they describe themselves as 'Born Free' and I hope that they and their offspring will always stay free. While I sympathise with their preoccupation with the need to get moving and their exposure of the misuse to which the rhetoric of nationalism has been put, I strongly believe that every generation must devote some time to understanding how things got to where they are. I am inclined to remind them of the adage that a people who forget their past are condemned to repeat it. The insistence on history is no way to

suggest a prelapsarian period of patriotism and fraternity unsullied by ascendancy to power, but to merely indicate the commitment and the idealism that drove the struggle for independence, and to point to the fact that some of the seeds of the scourges of post-colonial rule were sewn precisely during these phases: regionalism, sycophancy, the abuse of power, unaccountability, etc.

Africa is demographically the youngest continent on earth, although you wouldn't think so if you considered the fact that it is ruled by a gerontocracy. While the average age of the African head of state is sixty-two, that of the population is twenty, which is a third the average age of the African leaders. There are substantive differences between generations both in terms of objective conditions lived and subjectivities cultivated or entertained. One simple fact is that much of the 'liberationist' rhetoric has virtually no resonance among a generation that has been ruled by fellow Africans for two generations already. With African states discredited and African nationalism exhausted, a new view has emerged that denies Africans the leisure of contemplating what their past may have to do with the contemporary predicament. Reference to the negative colonial legacies is immediately dismissed as victimhood. However, when one pointed to the congenial aspects of colonialism, one was deemed courageous and refreshing. Having spent all their lives under the rule of their own nationals, the young generation understandably have bought into the downplaying of the victim's account of colonial history and the adverse form of inclusion of Africa into an extremely hierarchical and fierce world order. They have also bought into the argument that any suggestion that colonialism may have anything to do with our current condition is nothing but scapegoating or evidence of 'victimhood'. The paradox is that all this is happening while quantitative economic historians and institutionalists with no association with the work of Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* argue that 'path dependence' explains Africa's poor performance with respect to institutions, education, democracy, etc. (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001; Blanton, Mason, and Athow 2001; Englebert 2000; Michael, Reenock, and Nordstrom 2004).

This is also the time when there is what is tantamount to nostalgia for the good old days as colonial memorabilia gains respect, and what Issa Shivji has called the “moral rehabilitation of imperialism” (Shivji 2003). There has been a rebirth of revisionist history aimed at reinstalling the Glory of the Empire or retouching the ugly features of imperial domination. The former president of France had the temerity to remind Africans at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar to count their blessings for France’s selflessly undertaking the *Mission Civilatrice* that finally gave us a history. During the last three decades virtually every English prime minister has urged fellow citizens to be proud of the British Empire and the great good it did to mankind, and to cease being apologetic about it (Sautman and Yan 2006). Individual scholars have gained great repute for reinforcing this imperial chauvinism. In Britain, a positive account of imperial glory is apparently to be part of a new history syllabus.

I was in secondary school when Ghana gained its independence: this was an immensely momentous event as the attention of the whole continent was riveted on Ghana. Immediately after high school I joined the nationalist movement by first working voluntarily late into the night producing the Malawi News while working at the stores of the Public Works Department, awaiting my Cambridge School Certificate examination results. In January 1960, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan visited Nyasaland on his famous ‘Winds of Change’ tour. This was under the state of emergency in my country and no gathering of more than three people was allowed to meet in public. We defied the ban and overnight we organised a demonstration in front of the Ryalls Hotel where he was supposed to have lunch. We were immediately rounded up and detained. The attention of the press accompanying Macmillan and the coverage of the story in the British media led to our immediate release. We were surprised that the visiting Press had covered the event so extensively and were outraged by the police brutality. What did they think happened in the colonies? The reporting also led to a commission of inquiry – the Southworth Commission – which was set up to examine what had happened and, especially, the behaviour of the

police. The report exonerated the police, arguing that they had acted professionally and with restraint.

A few months later I was arrested again and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment with hard labour on trumped up charges of inciting violence. I was released after serving three months hard labour that consisted of breaking rocks. Soon after that we had self-government with Dr Banda as Prime Minister. A year later I went to the USA to study journalism. I was a beneficiary of the airlift that took thousands of us to the USA. Like many of my compatriots I was determined to complete my degree as fast as I could so I could return home and so did my four-year degree in three years. Alas the 'Malawi cabinet crisis' struck a few months after independence, signalling the beginning of what was to be thirty years of one man-rule and thirty years in exile for me. I recount this personal history to remind us that some of the nationalists are still alive and that the exclusive reliance on colonial officers' reports, especially police reports, distorts our history about nationalism.

What did Africans expect from Independence?

In many accounts about what Africans expected of national sovereignty there is the suggestion that Africans were naively utopian about what would follow on the morrow of independence. Around the time of independence there were many stories that circulated in the opposite camps of the colonial divide. Feverish transcripts circulated among the colonialists about what Africans thought they would do after independence. I recall stories peddled by the White Settler rumour mill about a Congolese who was seen inspecting cars or the sumptuous villas of the colons in the streets of Leopoldville. When asked what he was doing, he is reported to have said that he was choosing the car or villa he would take over after independence. This apocalyptic image was captured in Robert Ruark's *Uhuru*, a racist bestseller at the time. Such blatantly racist caricature of nationalist expectations was quite common in the Rhodesian press that was dominant in my part of the world. It was a reflection of the fears of the oppressor's vengeance. The more sophisticated versions of this caricature come out in

the interpretation of Nkrumah's exhortation to Africa: "Seek ye first the political kingdom and these other things shall be added unto thee". These words were to be given a utopian twist that is unrecognisable to my generation. My understanding of Nkrumah's Dictum at the age of eighteen or nineteen was that it was simply stating the barest minimum for addressing Africa's many problems and for restoring our humanity. What Nkrumah was stating was simply the contingency of any African project of social progress on political independence.

Two years before independence Dr Banda went around preaching peace and hard work. And, on a personal note, first, I was privileged to have read the book by Dunduzu Chisiza: *Africa – What Lies Ahead* (Chisiza 1961), in which the complexity of the future agenda was clearly spelled out, including the dangers of nationalist intoxication of leaders by hero-worship during the struggle. Second, as a young journalist I covered the first international conference organised by Dunduzu on economic development. The conference, funded by the Ford Foundation, was attended by such luminaries as Nicholas Kaldor, K.N. Raj, Peter Bauer, Bert Hoselitz, Robert Baldwin, and V.K.R. Rao⁴. In preparation for the conference, I had asked Dunduzu what I should read and he recommended Rowstow's *Stages of Economic Growth*. Armed with Chisiza's own book and Rowstow's book, I thought I could cover the event and so did my boss, Aleke (only a year older than me). The coverage was a flop, though, as I understood nothing about the complex issues being discussed: capital formation, balanced growth, underemployment, etc. I decided there and then that should I ever go to university I would do journalism and economics. But I digress. The point I am making is that the naive view of the 'political kingdom' wrongly read into Nkrumah's dictum was not widely shared. Both the nation-building and development tasks were seen as calling for 'sacrifice', just as the struggle for independence was. It is not surprising that among the slogans adopted by nationalists immediately after independence was "Uhuru na Kazi" (Freedom and Work), which spelled out the task ahead. What the nationalists promised was not less effort but the diminution of the gap between effort and

4 The papers from the Symposium were published in Jackson (1965).

reward. What dissipated people's enthusiasm and fervour was not the lack of instant gratification that was putatively promised by Nkrumah, but the wasteful deployment of their energy; the unfair incidence of the burden and sacrifices; the privatisation of what should have been social gains; the marginalisation of citizens from key decisions about development and, ultimately, the sheer greed and self-aggrandisement of the new leaders. In retrospect, if Africans were naive about anything it was in their belief that the new leaders would exercise power with greater accountability than their colonial masters could ever do, and would themselves make as many sacrifices as they demanded from their fellow citizens.

African nationalism has been maligned by both its advocates and detractors alike; the former by using it as camouflage for their misuse of authority and common assets, and the latter by denying its necessity or by arguing that, as a cure, it was worse than the ailment. Thus, it is sometimes grudgingly conceded that, while nationalism was an understandable response to the humiliations and the many indignities inflicted upon the colonised peoples, it was a disaster in economic terms. The idea is that there was a trade-off between the material well-being that colonialism wrought and the psychic well-being produced by nationalism. In the words of Harry Johnson: "It is quite possible that the psychic enjoyment that the mass of the population derives from the collective consumption aspects of nationalism suffices to compensate them for the loss of material income imposed on them by nationalistic economic policies, so that nationalistic policies arrive at a quite acceptable result from the standpoint of maximising satisfaction" (Johnson 1965: 184). Generally, nationalism was seen as merely redistributive and not concerned with the expansion of the cake (Breton 1964). This view is not historically borne out: many of the most dramatic cases of economic expansion in modern times have been driven by nationalism. Indeed, it is nationalism that has provided the ideological underpinnings of developmental states and their projects of industrialisation.⁵

5 For the East Asian 'Developmental States' see Johnson (1995); Woo-Cumings (1998); Woo-Cumings (1999). Some writers on nationalism have closely associated industrialisation to nationalism. Indeed, from Alexander Hamilton on, industrialisation has been closely associated with nationalist ideologies.

Had nationalism been faced with such a trade-off things might perhaps have been less complicated. The fact of the matter, however, was that the option they were faced with was colonialism and continued underdevelopment or independence. In some cases it was suggested that decolonisation was premature and Africans should have waited until they were ready for self-rule. This position begs the question: What would they have been waiting for? Colonialists had no plans for decolonisation, which partly explains why decolonisation always looked inherently 'premature'.⁶ Even if colonialism were associated with material well-being Sekou Toure's memorable words: 'Better poor on our feet than rich on our knees' had great resonance in my generation. A people could not reasonably be expected to postpone their humanity and to allow the timing of the recognition of their humanity to the whims of the oppressors. There was simply no option to 'Independence Now'.

The Challenges of Independence

Creating the New Nations and National Identity

The most obvious challenge to every African leader was keeping the new nation together. Even prior to independence, nationalist movements had to find a new voice and new identity for the disparate ethnic and cultural groups that share the colonially-defined country. Not surprisingly, there were many attempts at self-definition that included recovering a usable historical past, cultural relocation of the African people, etc.⁷ Historical references were often on past kingdoms that transcended the colonial borders that defined the new nation states. African nationalist ideologies rejected or at least evinced a pronounced distaste for ethno-linguistic nationalism and favoured civic nationalism, an analytically clear distinction, but one that was quite difficult to make in real political life. Other than Somalia,

6 Patrice Lumumba was jailed for proposing to Belgians that the Congo should be granted independence in 1985.

7 It is often forgotten that, up until independence, many nationalist movements of southern Africa used 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' as their nationalist anthem. Some, like Zambia and Zimbabwe, kept the anthem.

many African countries eschewed ethnocultural expressions of nationalism that accorded full status and membership of the national community only to those possessing the required ethnic attributes. They chose instead civic nationalism based on pan-Africanism or racial claims of identity. The iconography of African nationalism did not correspond to any ethnic group and the new nation states were not understood in ethno-cultural terms. Nationalist movements avoided self-definition in terms of ethnicity. African leaders were often at the forefront of this redefinition and self-discovery. Senghor's Negritude, Nkrumah's African Personality and Azikiwe's Africa Irredentism were part of this story. Over the years, civic nationalism has been weakened through the erosion of faith in the social justice promised by nationalist leaders and movements, thus opening up room for various ethnic nationalism and claims.

This vagueness about its precise cultural underpinnings and its lack of an ethnic identity – at least by the time of independence – was the discrete charm of African nationalism. Movements that had begun as ethnic 'native association' or 'ethnic liberation' movements had redefined themselves into national movements, many of which saw 'tribalism' as their sworn enemies. Frelimo's ominous "Kill the Tribe to Save the Nation" is probably the most iconic expression of the desire to do away with ethnic identity. Nyerere put the same point as follows: "In Tanzania, it was more than one hundred tribal units which lost their freedom; it was one nation that regained it" (Nyerere 1969).

Some of the later writings, especially those in the short-lived 'post-nationalism' mode, have accused these ideologies and philosophies of nativism, or of essentialising Africans. Indeed, for some this was pure racist cant. After all, none other than Jean Paul Sartre defined it: 'Anti-Racist Racism'. However, one has to consider the possibility that much of this was simply an assertion of African humanity in the face of an unrelenting assault on African people and their cultures. To Wole Soyinka's quip that a "Tiger did not proclaim its Tigritude", Senghor had elegantly responded "But a Tiger is not human". For as Mafeje aptly put it:

It was the historical experience of racial humiliation, economic exploitation, political oppression, and cultural domination under European and American slavery, colonialism, and imperialism that gave rise to theories of “African personality” and “Negritude”. At the centre of these theories was the question of the liberation of the Black man – his identity or the meaning of “being-Black-in-the-world”. It was a philosophical or moral justification for action, for a rebellion which gave rise to African nationalism and to independence. The latter was the greatest political achievement by Africans. It was an unprecedented collective fulfilment”. (cited in Shivji 2004)

In this respect, pan-Africanism played an important role. It is perhaps not surprising that the image of Africa as a continent is the most sung about, the most painted, the most sculptured and carved of any continent. And yet, Africa has failed to institute political and economic structures that somehow matched these cultural and emotional legitimating myths and dreams of pan-Africanism (Mkandawire 2011).

African nationalism has been, for better or worse, more successful than it imagined in naturalising the colonial borders and the identities that went along with it. For all their ethnic diversity, African nation states were generally accepted by their citizens. Movements for secession are rare in Africa, prompting some to talk about ‘secessionist deficit’.⁸ One of the ironies of African nationalism is that it subsequently failed to exploit its successes and, instead, kept harping on an issue that it had in fact resolved. Underestimating how, in fact, united the identities of their citizens were around the nation, many nationalists kept on opportunistically evoking the dangers of disunity and secession often to justify authoritarian rule. They also conflated unity with conformity in a manner that actually threatened national unity by failing to accommodate the diversity that citizens were willing to live with or were used to living with.

8 The deficit arises from theoretical expectations that since African nations contain within them they should have more secessionist movements. Failure to live up to these expectations has then produced the ‘deficit’ (Englebert and Hummel 2005).

African national identities are not new in the sense that they date from their independence days in the 1960s. The creation of national consciousness began immediately after the colonial definitions of borders. Over the years the agenda of this emerging national consciousness has changed. The initial responses to imperial incursions pitted the imperial authority against traditional authority and various forms of armed resistance took on an ethnic identity. However, after imperial subjugation, euphemistically referred to as 'pacification' under the new borders mapped by the colonial powers, new forms of resistance emerged within these borders. The early nationalist responses were by new African elites seeking recognition as educated citizens and equal to their masters. They basically challenged the 'colour bar' that the colonialists had erected. With the passage of time, these elites sought some kind of political representation to speak for themselves and their fellow countrymen. Later the agenda was driven towards a liberal call for suffrage on a 'one man one vote' basis, and eventually there was the clamour for sovereignty. When colonial rule proved recalcitrant, and movements were forced to take up arms, socialism became a major feature of nationalist ideologies and rhetoric (Mkandawire 2009).

Others have argued that this acceptance and sanctification of colonial borders served only to encourage forms of nationalism that have undermined the pan-African dream and to constitute what Basil Davidson referred to as 'The Black Man's Burden'. It is however, fair to say that the post-colonial regional arrangements and the acceptance of existing colonial borders have minimised interstate warfare in Africa. Both the internal peace and the intra-state arrangements are today threatened by both internal and external forces. In more recent years, some of the less scrupulous leaders have violated the tenets of African nationalism by seeking more precise ethnic boundaries to their nationhood and national identity, or more 'natural' borders. And, some leaders have promoted ethnic irredentist conceptions of nationhood such as 'Ivoirite' in Cote d' Ivoire; or Chiluba's redefinition of Zambian citizenship. In the worst case, this has led to ethnic cleansing of Rwanda. We should be conscious of the dangers of territorial revisionism – and irredentist

claims. They will simply tear Africa apart. What we can do is to give these borders a new meaning in the spirit of pan-Africanism, and to address the cultural absurdity of our borders.

The Challenge of Neo-colonialism

The second challenge faced by the new states in exercising their sovereignty was posed by the continued influences of the erstwhile colonial powers on the affairs of the new nation. The colonial powers were bent on turning independence into a 'Flag Independence', in which everything but the flag remained the same. The Belgian officer who drew an organogram for Congolese soldiers suggesting that nothing would change at the top may have gone too far. The Congolese gendarmes thought he did and revolted, sparking a cycle of violence that is still with us to this very day. But that gesture was repeated in many forms and it was immediately and aptly labelled as neo-colonialism. None other than Kwame Nkrumah devoted a whole book to the phenomenon, which he considered as the last phase of imperialism (Nkrumah 1966). He understood neo-colonialism as: "A state can be said to be a neo-colonialist or client state if it is independent *de jure* and dependent *de facto*. It is a state where political power lies in the conservative forces of the former colony and where economic power remains under control of international finance capital". The problem of imperialism remained on the agenda long after decolonisation had taken place and the University of Dar es Salaam was the leading theatre for its intellectual dissection. The obsession with neo-colonialism was not simply a visceral reaction of new states. It was a response to a real and well-articulated threat. Neo-colonialism was the understanding and the openly advocated position of the erstwhile colonial masters, and the new hegemony that the new independence had to be circumscribed and radical nationalism foiled. Assassinations and coup d'états were frequently wielded instruments: practices that were deeply etched in our memories by the assassination of Lumumba and later the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah.

It was this lived experience of neo-colonialism that made Africa a fertile ground for the Dependence School and anti-imperialism. However, the reason the Dependence School had so much resonance was not only because it pointed to obvious and often crude machinations and the real fact of colonial domination despite political liberation, but also because there did, in fact, appear the possibilities of a rupture from these exploitative relationships. Calls for a New International Economic Order and 'Collective Self-Reliance' were partly spurred by the dramatic rise of OPEC and the real possibility that, through cartels and various forms of collaboration, developing countries would confront the monopolies that dominated the commodity markets.

The Quest for Development

One slogan that permeated nationalist discourse in Africa was that about 'combating the unholy trinity of ignorance, poverty and disease', which was borrowed from Nehru's Independence Day speech. The struggle for development had, among its many objectives, what a Senegalese lawyer was later to refer to as the 'Right to Development'. It has been suggested by some of the post-modernist and post-colonial literature that the pursuit of the development agenda was simply following the Truman Doctrine, from which much of the whole aid business originates. This may be true for western governments and scholars. In my generation, the argument for development came from the Bandung conference, which not only condemned imperialism and colonial rule but saw the 'right to industrialisation' as a legitimate pursuit. Many of the development efforts and the posture of developing countries in the UN system were defined by that. And so, while the Truman story may be over, that driven by the Bandung doctrine is still on, and for good reason.

Economic and Social Progress

The immediate post-independence decade witnessed fairly high levels of economic growth in many African countries. The average growth was 5.7 per cent for more than a decade. In some countries

like Botswana, the Ivory Coast, Kenya and Malawi, the rates of growth produced 'miracles'. Many African countries took the first steps towards industrialisation and structural change. Today's much trumpeted recovery is about the same as the growth rates of the much maligned 'interventionist' era.

Because of their social origins, many new African leaders were strong believers in the importance of education, and considerable investment was made in the sector (Adésinà 2007a; Adésinà 2007b). Ministers of Education occupied key positions in most post-colonial governments before structure adjustment relegated them to the putatively more wasteful category of 'Spending Ministries'. The expansion of health services also occupied a central position. Ideologically and normatively, both education and health services were to be based on universalistic principles of service provision and access. It is perhaps not surprising that one source of resistance to structural adjustment was because it challenged these principles of access and introduced notions of 'user charged' commercialisation of social services and narrow targeting to the 'poor'.

Looking back, and in light of the major reversals in the adjustment years, one is struck by some of the efforts at the improvement of social welfare by many African governments during the first decades of independence. Both ideological predilections and the exigencies of 'nation-building' of development led governments to invest heavily in education and health. The new nations expanded social services dramatically – raising levels of school enrolment and improving mortality rates considerably. Some of the most dramatic changes in school enrolment ratios in human history took place in Africa during this period (Mkandawire, 1999b). There is also evidence suggesting that, in many countries, inequality declined in the immediate post-independence years (Milanovic, 2003), and in some countries, such as Tanzania, inequalities were kept low even long after. This is not to suggest that the development paths chosen were seriously addressing issues of social inclusion and equality. After all, there was a huge literature within Africa denouncing the growing inequality and the failure of governments to meet the 'basic

needs' of the population. Already by the mid-Seventies, it became clear that the models of development adopted were generating great inequalities and failing to meet the basic needs of much of the population. The uneven development engendered by the models was also ethnically polarising the continent. The international community began to propose strategies that would address some aspects of the economic malaise by proposing 'Basic Needs' strategies or 'Growth with Redistribution' strategies. In general, African governments did not pay much attention to these calls and, in the international arena, they insisted on addressing the global injustice of the extant international division of labour. Buoyed by favourite terms of trade, they joined forces with other Third World countries to call for a 'New International Economic Order' (Mkandawire, 1983). And for a while, the Third World seemed to have some leverage, forcing the rich countries to acknowledge the 'interdependence' among different countries of the world and willing to consider a New International Economic Order, if only rhetorically.

There was tension between the social policy aspirations and the chosen model of industrialisation, which generated few jobs and reinforced dualistic labour markets. The first tension was the growing inequality in the post-independence phase. And, among the Left, there was the additional fact of it being a capitalist growth path, compounded by the fact that it was not managed by the 'national bourgeoisie', but a 'comprador', 'petty', 'dependent' bourgeoisie. The second criticism was the dependence of the growth path on protected foreign investments. The growth path was seen to produce what Justinian Rweyemamu referred to as 'perverse capitalist industrial development' (Rweyemamu 1973), whose core articulation was not between the capital goods and the wage goods, but between the export sector and luxury consumer goods.

The third was the failure of the strategy to induce any structural change that would lead to the diversification of the structure of production and export diversification.

And finally, it was the utter failure of pan-African integration, as the process was confounded by the spaghetti bowl of treaties signed by Heads of State who were totally oblivious of their mutual

consistency or implementation ability. I personally believe two factors have worked against the pan-African dream. One has been authoritarian rule. There has never been a federation of dictators. The second is that the shallowness of our individual national visions has not permitted us to see that regional integration is an important ingredient in any meaningful transformation of our own countries and the continent

The Challenge of Social Differentiation

It is often suggested that African scholarship was focused only on external factors for the continent's underdevelopment, while ignoring or downplaying domestic factors. This is patently misleading. Closely related to the preoccupation with neo-colonialism were questions about the adequacy of the emerging ruling classes for the project of nation-building, the integrity of new leaders, and the emerging class differentiation. Frantz Fanon (1967) had raised serious doubt about the emerging ruling classes, which he claimed had attained senility without ever going through a renaissance. Our more prescient writers had, on the morrow of independence, already suggested some of the things to come. Wole Soyinka, commissioned to celebrate Nigeria's Independence, in *A Dance of the Forests*, sought to remind citizens of the chronic dishonesty and abuse of power which colonialism had bred into generations of native politicians. The South African, Peter Abrahams, had, in a *Wreath of Udomo*, anticipated the difficulties of the movement from colonialism to independence, and pointed to some of the conflicts, intrigues and betrayal that were to appear in post-colonial politics.

Some social scientists immediately posited not only the emergence of class differentiation but also the playing out of class struggles albeit "silent" as suggested by Issa Shivji (Shivji 1972). Claude Ake propounded on the emergence of 'revolutionary pressures'. I once jokingly suggested to Issa that the 'silence' may have signified the absence of such a struggle. As Karl Marx argued, the existence of classes may portend class struggles, but does not automatically trigger them. It is not enough that classes exist in themselves. They must also be for themselves, and that is an extremely complex

process of consciousness, agitation and organisation. Nevertheless, the studies did point to an important sociological phenomenon that has been lost in the era of crude materialism and reductionism of rational choice theories. We today hear talk about 'middle classes' defined not in terms of their social relations with other classes but with that of their consumption. In this 'class analysis' there is no mention of the hierarchies that include 'upper' or 'lower' classes, later alone capitalists, landlords, workers, peasants, etc.

The Challenge of Democracy

As soon as African countries attained independence and held their first post-independence elections, many of them pronounced themselves as being a 'one party state'. The call for 'One Man One Vote' was re-edited so as to read: 'One Man, One Vote, and One Time'. In some cases, the military immediately killed or overthrew the nationalist leaders. And within a decade many of the one-party states had degenerated into highly personalised or ethicised dictatorships – or had been replaced by even more authoritarian regimes than the ones they had overthrown. Many factors accounted for this turn of events. I will confine myself to only three.

The colonial legacy

The first of these was the colonial heritage and the nature of the struggle for independence. One of the stubborn myths about Africa is that the colonial system bequeathed Africans democracy and that somehow African nationalists squandered this inheritance. Elections were not imposed by the colonial governments: nationalist movements imposed elections on the colonial masters. The call for 'One Man One Vote' became so closely associated with independence that the call for democracy was a central aspect of the nationalist agenda; hence the reference to waves of democratisation in the 1990s as the 'Second Independence'. The fact is that in many African countries the most memorable colonial act before independence was the 'state of emergency'. Many of the Draconian measures introduced in the post-colonial era simply involved dusting up the old colonial manuals on repression. Related to this is the myth

that the Western powers chaperoned the new democracies towards democracy. The international geopolitical context that prevailed was hostile to democratisation. African independence was a fraught affair. It occurred in the midst of the 'Cold War', which was to condition the denouement of the struggle for independence in many African countries. More significantly, the superpowers, each for their own reason, were suspicious of democracy in the developing countries. For the West, allowing democracy in the context of the much-dreaded 'revolution of rising expectations' (Huntington 1968) was playing into communist hands. For the East, liberal democracy was deemed inferior to the many 'People's Democracies' that they supported.

Looking back over the fifty years one is struck by how much influence the process of decolonisation itself still colours contemporary politics and economies in Africa. The difference between the politics of Kenya and Tanzania is not simply due to the character of Mzee and Mwalimu, but is also a reflection of different patterns of colonisation and responses and mobilisation against colonialism. Nationalists did not pay much attention to the eventual consequences of the process of decolonisation itself for the nation-building project, although they were conscious of the fact that the colonialists had been engaged in 'Divide and Rule' tactics throughout their rule.

The way the struggle for independence was waged, and the forms of resistance and tenacity used by the colonial masters, had a profound impact on how, in turn, the nationalists' movements conducted their affairs. The movements that had initially conducted themselves openly, increasingly adopted clandestine tactics to deal with what they believed were a recalcitrant colonial order. Things became worse when nationalist movements were compelled to resort to armed struggle, which not only led to the militarisation of nationalist movements with serious consequences for the future, but often called for great personal sacrifices, which created 'national heroes'. 'Hero worship' became the deadly underbelly of African nationalism. The more recalcitrant the colonialist the more heroic was the process of dislodging colonial rule and the greater was the inflation of the position of the leaders. This also encouraged

the sense of entitlement to power by those who had led the struggle. The idea that someone who had not taken part in the struggle would somehow assume office was totally anathema to these leaders. Indeed, in the extreme, as was the case in Zimbabwe, handing over powers to any other movements was tantamount to betraying the many that had died in the struggle. It would take the enormous integrity of a Mandela to avoid being seduced into believing that one was not indispensable. It is in this light that the stature of Nelson Mandela towers over all African leaders.

We were not totally blind to the fact that what we had in our hands was 'a Faustian Bargain'. Again, in my own case, I had read the prescient text of Dunduzu Chisiza and his warning. I also had read Peter Abrahams' *Wreath for Udumo*.

To compound matters, 'decolonisation' or 'independence' was framed in plebiscitary terms. It was not enough that national elites wanted to rule their countries; they had to demonstrate even before elections were conceded that they in fact had unified movements that wanted independence. After all, one reason given for delaying the granting of independence was that it would lead to 'tribal warfare'. The pressure then was on showing a 'united front', which immediately reduced those who refused to join the front into 'quislings'. Here the colonial masters resorted to considerable duplicity: while premising independence on 'national unity', they did everything to disrupt the unity. These divisive machinations of the erstwhile colonial masters, practiced to the very end, took their bloodiest form in the Congo with the erstwhile colonial masters supporting the breakup of the Congo and arranging the assassination of Lumumba. Lumumba's murder was a traumatising experience for my generation. Not only did it make the Cold War real but it exposed the weakness of the United Nations in which the nationalists had placed great faith. The 'Secession of Katanga' was to be indelibly etched in the minds of every nationalist. The character of 'Tshombe' became the most despicable figure in the historiography of nationalism. And the worst nationalists could say about their opponents is that they were 'Tshombes'. These last minute manoeuvres and tactics of 'divide and rule' tarnished the

image of the opposition, who were seen as stooges or creations of the colonial masters. They also lent considerable weight to the obsession for 'National Unity', a point that is often ignored in the criticism of 'patriotic history', which has obliterated the role of other movements in the struggles for independence.

National Unity and the One-Party State

We noted earlier the concern over national unity and nation-building that gripped post-colonial nationalist politics. The acceptance (but not celebration) of multi-ethnicity and the fear of 'Katangas' placed a high premium on combating what were perceived as centrifugal and divisive forces of tribalism and the colonial machinations of 'divide and rule'. This task was perceived as requiring authoritarian or one-party rule as democracy was dreaded for opening spaces to those who would pander to ethno-nationalism. It also meant that African countries were often not prepared to openly address some of the ethnic conflicts that inevitably arose. Although 'tribalism' was never vanquished, its low standing produced a political discourse that gave it no public hearing: Political correctness involved public denial of any ethnic consideration of management of national affairs on the one hand and a nocturnal devotion to managing interethnic problems. The consequence was a dire one: 'otherwise anodyne expressions of ethnic identity and claims were turned into something lethal. It also produced a rather schizophrenic political culture in which leaders were 'nationalist by day but tribalist by night' (Mkandawire 2004b).

Developmentalism and the Myth of the 'Authoritarian Advantage'

Perhaps the most recalcitrant driver for authoritarianism has been the ideology of development, or 'developmentalism', which, in the name of economic progress, trumped upon many things of intrinsic value due to the mistaken view that economic development required 'Blood, Sweat and Tears', leading Amartya Sen to label this version of development with the acronym "BLAST". Leading development thinkers propounded on the 'Full Belly Thesis', which simply argued that people cannot eat democracy. The Burkina Faso

historian, Kizerbo, suggested that with this kind of discourse we might as well put a sign on Africa stating: 'silence, development in progress'.

In Malawi, democratic politics lasted exactly three months after independence. I found myself on the wrong side of the political divide and I was declared *persona non-grata*. In one of the speeches in which I was directly attacked, Dr Banda argued that intellectuals have never ruled the world and referred to Plato as an example. I had just finished my first degree and I had absolutely no illusion then and ever since that time that my name could sensibly be associated with Plato.

To my bewilderment, I was to learn in college that these leaders and their charisma were necessary conditions for the institution of political order in our new countries. And so, during much of my undergraduate studies on economic and political development, I had to live with literature that suggested that the new political order in Malawi was the best of all possible outcomes: Malawi – with a strong charismatic leader, a single strong party, and a 'united' nation. However, learning about the necessity of such leadership, when one was just beginning what was to be thirty years of exile, left one with the feeling that one was going against the tide of history. What was one to do with the historical figure that had just banished you and that had ordered his followers to capture you and bring you to him 'alive if possible, or dead if necessary'. What my personal fate did for me was to permanently set me at odds with the authoritarian versions of developmentalism.

Later, in the 1980s, the 'East Asian miracle' brought to life once again the arguments for 'bureaucratic authoritarianism' as necessary for development. It should not be forgotten that in its initial years, structural adjustment was strongly opposed to democracy. The authoritarian regimes implementing Structural Adjustment Programs had more than a sotto voce support of the Western powers. Within Africa, dictators such as Dr Banda were cited as evidence that such 'strong men' were necessary for our well-being, and definitely for implementing structural adjustment. The Musevenis and Jerry Rawlings were cited as examples of such efficacious authoritarian rule. The policy reversal by the Kaundas after a 'food riot' and a few deaths was compared unfavourably to

the resoluteness of the Pinochets of the world and the jackbooted replicas on the African continent. It was made clear that the default political mode of adjustment was authoritarian.

Much of the political scholarship on Africa hankered for 'strong men' who would establish the authoritarian bureaucratic order that would implement structural adjustments by riding roughshod over popular opposition. In the meantime, the inclination of African research networks was to embark on an assault on militarism and to begin to explore the role of social movements in bringing about social change and democratisation in Africa. In the mid-1980s, African scholars began to raise the issue of democracy in Africa. The approach then was to seek social movements that might be the political bearers of the project of democratisation. Research networks, such as CODESRIA, the Association of African Political Scientists (AAPS), and the Third World Network, all launched research projects on social movements and conducted work on the scourge of Africa at the time: the military and militarisation (Hutchful 1989). There were also lively debates on the functional relationship between democracy and development, which was a subject of intense debate in African intellectual circles, with one group led by yours truly being that democracy was good in itself and that one should not premise one's support for democracy on purely instrumental arguments. Peter Anyang had suggested that democracy was good for development, a point that aroused considerable debates in CODESRIA circles (Anyang' Nyong'o 1988; Anyang' Nyong'o 1989, Chole and Jibril 1995; Mafeje 1993; Mkandawire 1994; Shivji 1989). In a paper for the General Assembly of CODESRIA in 1995 with the title 'Beyond Crisis: Towards Democratic Developmental States' (Mkandawire 1995), I tried to push debates in CODESRIA towards consideration of 'democratic developmental states' in Africa, not on grounds that one was an instrument of the other but on the principle that both addressed issues of intrinsic value and that it was incumbent upon us to think of ways of achieving both. For some reason the paper was never published by CODESRIA. A revised version came out six years later in the Cambridge Journal of Economics.

Quite remarkably, at the time it was virtually impossible to get funding on these themes and so, perhaps inadvertently, the Swedes with their no-strings-attached support funded much of this research. One explanation for the reticence of other donors may have to do with the understanding by most funders that structural adjustments required 'strong governments' and, not surprisingly, the best performers in this respect were the Rawlings and the Museveni of the world. The themes were not only difficult to fund but conferences on them were difficult to host outside Senegal. A few years after Rawlings had come to office, Eboe Hutchful, a Ghanaian who was coordinating our research project on 'Military and Militarism' convinced me as Executive Secretary of CODESRIA that we could hold the meeting in Accra. When we arrived in Accra from Dakar with the conference papers, the security people at the airport impounded the documents and we had to wait for two days before the conference could resume. The conference itself was inundated by dark-glassed security folks who monitored the proceedings.⁹ It was only much later when the issue of 'Good Governance' arose that funding on problems of democratisation was made available.

The Challenge of the International Economic Order

In the 1970s, there was a revival of some of the themes of the Bandung Conference, encouraged by the possibility that developing countries might escape the grip of their erstwhile colonial masters. This hope was fuelled by the prospect of a 'New International Economic Order', whose possibility was made more credible by the high prices for raw materials and the spectacular rise of OPEC. While international organisations focused on domestic policies and their impact on social welfare, African government focused elsewhere on the international system. Indeed, at one time it did seem that there was a diplomatic game going on here, with the rich countries seeking to detract attention from global inequalities by focusing on domestic inequalities (Mkandawire 1983).

9 The papers of the proceedings were eventually published by CODESRIA in a book edited by Eboe Hutchful (1998).

Structural Adjustment and the Lost Decades

In the 1960s and 1970s, nationalism seemed capable of 'delivering' the promise of development. Rates of growth and, more spectacularly, social provision improved dramatically. By the end of the 1970s, the high growth of African economies came to an end, buffeted by high prices, the fall in terms of trade, and being rationed out of the world financial markets following the Mexican crisis. This ushered in a period in which dogmatically pursued deflationary policies were to wreak havoc on African economies producing the 'Lost Decades'.

Africa went through close on two 'Lost Decades' in which incomes fell, the social and political fabric came under enormous strain, and foreign interference in African affairs increased dramatically. Africa's standing in the world was at its lowest since independence. Many friends of Africa felt disillusioned and betrayed. Afropessimism became a la mode with the Economist baldly declaring the continent 'The Hopeless Continent'. In terms of scholarship, one did not have to provide any evidence for negative assertions about Africa. It was as if it was enough to find a new epithet for the African malaise to get published. I recall writing a paper on the developmental state in which I asserted that African countries had witnessed a period of fairly rapid growth in the sixties and early seventies (Mkandawire 2001). I was asked to substantiate my argument and included a table which showed that twenty of the fastest growing economies included nine African, only three of which were mineral rich. Contrast that with the appearance of articles that cavalierly asserted that African economies had continuously declined since decolonisation, or that declared that African countries could never pursue developmental policy.

Africa has often been studied by analogues to something else. A malaise identified for Latin America or Asia could be transferred to Africa without much reflection. Thus, the fact that Latin American infantile industries may have stayed too long in that stage was transferred to Africa with some writers stating categorically that import substitution had been tried in Africa but had failed. And yet, a case could be made, and indeed has been made, that the phase of 'import substitution industrialisation' was too short

to have produced the senility associated with Latin American industrialisation. With the exception of South Africa and Rhodesia, Black Africa had missed out on the three periods of import substitution in the developing countries (Mkandawire, 1988). The first two were import substitution industrialisation (ISI), by default engendered by the Great Depression and the Second World War. The third phase was the immediately post-World War period when import substitution had been formalised into a strategy by the Latin American structuralists. This strategy involved industrialisation by invitation, in which the State attracted foreign direct investment into manufacturing, or took a more state capitalist path in which the State took on entrepreneurial roles or a combination of both. In all these cases, it was important that the country was sovereign. By the time African countries got their independence and began ISI in the mid-1960s, there were already new challenges to the strategy. In any case, by 1975, first from the oil crisis and later the debt crisis, the truly 'infant industries' in Africa were in big trouble, which was not related to excessive protection over a long period of time. The 'adjustment' that Africans embarked on was not one aimed at redirecting these new industries towards new markets, but one that fundamentally aimed at their elimination and the direction of Africa towards its comparative advantage as 'discovered' or defined by the erstwhile colonial masters.

There were, of course, many problems with Africa's all too brief industrialisation efforts and many of these weaknesses were the subjects of considerable concern within Africa long before structural adjustment (Amin 1982; Diouf 1982; Mkandawire 1977; Mkandawire 1981; Rweyemamu 1973; Rweyemamu 1978). The central concerns were: technological dependence; economic dualism or lack of articulation between various sectors; labour conditions; and surplus expatriation.

In 1977, the African directors at the World Bank requested advice from the world on how to achieve the then already impressive East Asian rates of growth that exceeded Africa's own 5.7 per cent growth rate. In 1981, the World Bank issued a report popularly known as the 'Berg Report'. The title of the report was not about recovery but

about 'Accelerated Growth': In the event, what followed was the 'Lost Decades'. Reggie Green reported that an African Finance Minister commented at the time of the release of the Berg Report: "We asked for bread and they gave us a stone" (Green, 1998).

Coincidentally, Robert Bates published his seminal book *Markets and State in Tropical Africa* (Bates, 1981), which provided the political economic explanation for the policies pursued by African governments since independence. The combined impact of the 'Berg Report' and Robert Bates' was to exercise profound influence on policy and perceptions of African political economy. Remarkably, both studies had limited empirical foundations. The Berg Report described an Africa that had witnessed steady and unrelenting decline since independence but this was not true. Africa had been growing for much of the first post-colonial decade when it in fact enjoyed fairly high levels of growth. The Bates account was premised on the existence of organised interest groups that thwarted exported industrialisation by advocating protective tariffs for rent generating activities. However, as Bates was to admit, there was little evidence of the existence of such a sociological fact (Bates and Krueger 1993). Both the recentness of industrialisation and urbanisation made the existence of such an organised interest group sociologically implausible. However, the search for the internal causes of the African malaise continued. And these were to be found in 'Neopatrimonialism'. This was a superficially formidable concept that could explain virtually everything. I have critically discussed the literature on neopatrimonialism elsewhere.¹⁰

The Berg report was simply the first of a slew of reports on Africa, each of which carried an uplifting title. While, as we saw, the Berg Report (World Bank, 1981) promised 'accelerated development' in Africa, three years later Africans were told that they were moving 'toward sustained development' (World Bank, 1983). Two years later the good news from the World Bank was that it had embarked on 'financing adjustment with growth in sub-Saharan Africa' (World Bank, 1986), making one wonder what they had

10 See http://www.iffs.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2013_1_1_thandika_mkandawire.pdf

been financing all along. Another three years later, in 1989, the Bank (World Bank, 1989) suggested it had finally found the missing piece of the puzzle – ‘governance’. With this knowledge sub-Saharan Africa was now ready to move ‘from crisis to sustainable growth’. In the 1994 report, claiming that adjustment was working, the Bank optimistically mapped Africa the ‘road ahead,’ (World Bank, 1994), which was essentially a regurgitation of the Berg report. A year later Africans were told that they were living in ‘a continent in transition’ (World Bank, 1995). By the beginning of the millennium the World Bank seemed a little uncertain and posed the question, “Can Africa reclaim the twenty-first century?” (World Bank, 2000). In 2007, the World Bank mapped out ‘strategic directions’ to address ‘challenges of African growth’ (Ndulu, 2007). The remarkable thing about these reports is that they all called for more of the same thing regardless of the accumulating evidence that the adjustment models was fundamentally flawed as a model of development.

The 1980s and 1990s were terrible years for the continent and bitter ones for my generation. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse – symbolising Conquest, War, Famine and Death – had such a grip on the continent. Economies had tanked and a decade of structural adjustment had only made things worse: Africa was the only continent in which the absolute number of the poor had risen; the HIV/AIDS pandemic was ravaging large swathes of the continent, reversing significant progress in infant mortality and life expectancy; the continent was the site of conflicts that led to huge losses of life among civilians through genocide, wanton violence and the depredations of war. The good news of the end of apartheid with the April 1994 elections and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President were brutally juxtaposed with the genocide in Rwanda. In those months of April and May, there were jarring contrasts between the images of a dancing Mandela and those of corpses floating in rivers or in Lake Victoria. ‘Paradigms of Doom’, to use Michael Chege’s words (Chege, 1997), had a field day sustaining what was to be known as ‘Afropessimism’ – a disease to which Africans seem to be singularly immune – spread not only in the public media, as signalled by the Economist’s pronouncement

of Africa as a 'Hopeless Continent', but to the academic world as well. Political scientists talked about the malaise of African culture, especially its tendency towards affinities that led to the deadly 'logic of neopatrimonialism', which made developmental social arrangements to propel Africa's development impossible (Bayart, 1993; Olivier de Sardan, 1999; Reno, 1993; Van de Walle, 1992). Robert Kaplan's *The Coming Anarchy* which tells of the interaction between environment and politics to lead to disaster was generally interpreted as referring to Africa. These disasters were to be amplified by a press that was embedded in the humanitarian world. Journalists visiting Africa would call upon NGOs who would pick them up at the airport, house them in special lodges, and take them to their projects in the disaster areas. In this coverage, the Africans remained as mute as in the Tarzan films, providing the background for conversations between western journalists and western humanitarian workers. It has only been with the coming of Al Jazeera that local doctors, political scientists, lawyers, etc. are now regularly interviewed as sources of opinion or information.

Economic historians suggested that much of Africa had been colonised by too few whites as the ravages of mosquitoes and other tropical ills had prevented white settlements and, therefore, good institutions (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson, 2001). It seems forgotten in these accounts that areas where 'good institutions' were eventually introduced were also areas of apartheid and genocide of native populations.¹¹ Rational choice economists zeroed in to suggest that Africa's conflicts were driven by nothing but greed (Collier, 2000), or that the continent's ethnic diversity acted negatively in economic growth by compounding collective action difficulties and undermining the provision of public goods (Easterly and Levine 1995). Geographical determinists suggested that Africa's vast resources were a 'curse' and that geography (Sachs and Warner 1995), especially the large number of landlocked countries, was also a curse, or that the sparsity of population undermined the reach of

11 One reading could be that where Whites did not eliminate indigenous people they could not introduce good institutions in their full form.

the State (Herbst 2000). Demographers also chipped in by revising the Malthusian nightmare of population growth overwhelming food production; anthropologists asserted that Africans were too immersed in the world of spirit to think straight or that hearing voices from their ancestors undermined rational thought. The bellicists suggested that African states were too weak because they had had no wars to compel them to consolidate their extractive capacities. Drawing on the work of Charles Tilly they called for more wars to create strong states. A little war here and there would help the continent overcome this particular difficulty (Herbst, 1990). The Pax Africana that prevented fragmentation of African states and interstate wars was seen as a hindrance in the process of state formation. Some suggested that Africa suffered from 'secessionist deficits' (Englebert, (2005).

With local elites discredited, some quite openly called for various forms of recolonisation in the name of 'humanitarian interventionism'. Military interventionism is now sanitised as humanitarian interventions. William Pfaff, a liberal columnist writing in the influential *Foreign Affairs* in 1994 observed that, "Most of Africa lacks the crucial educated middle and professional classes and the mediating private and public institutions that compose a "civil society" . . . Much of Africa needs, to put it plainly, what one could call a disinterested neo-colonialism" (William Pfaff 1994). On our side, Ali Mazrui had suggested that the lesson of the Rwandan genocide was that Africa should be recolonised (Mazrui 1994). Much less attention was paid to the carnage that all this would entail.

If in the 1960s solidarity and the admiration of the nationalist leadership led to a more laudatory choice of words, the situation today is different. Disdain and contempt for local elites has replaced the wide-eyed solidarity and admiration.

It is now the 'lame leviathan state'; the 'swollen state'; the 'soft state'; the 'predatory state'; the 'patron-clientelist state'; the 'prebendal state'; the 'rent-seeking state'; the 'overextended state'; the 'parasitical state'; the 'crony state'; the 'kleptocratic state'; the 'vampire state'; the 'perverted capitalist state'; the 'patrimonial administrative state'; the 'unsteady state'; the 'underground state'...

This produced the paradigmatic context within much of the scholarship on Africa in the 1980s and the 'Afropessimism' brought along with it a permissible vocabulary and language which provided the labels for African phenomena, especially the State. It is true that the early, more Marxian literature had pointed to the incompleteness of class formation in Africa; to the petit bourgeois nature; the neo-colonial dependence, etc. but this was nothing compared to the absolute condemnation and contempt that was lived by a torrent of invectives. The paradigmatic framework permitted views that may not have been shared by all, but which were not considered as being beyond the pale. The collective effects of this writing were to create an atmosphere of despair that normalised the negative, unmediated by serious empirical work, and in some sense freed from close scrutiny because of its obvious 'factuality'. That is, of course, what paradigms are about and the blind spots they induce are parts of the paradigms' strength.

Through a process of incestuous cross-citation that lent spurious scientific credibility to what were essentially heavily-footnoted travelogues compiled during increasingly brief sojourns to the continent, a 'paradigm' of Africa emerged upon which journalists could draw to inform their work about Africa. The weakness of research institutions in Africa and an ignorance of what was actually going on in African research compelled much of the writing on Africa to rely on anecdotes. Now, anecdotes can be useful, but in the absence of any means of adjudicating between plausible and implausible anecdotes, anything goes.

This mood led to a serious misreading of the African landscape. The conflicts that broke out in many parts of Africa were attributed entirely to greed, to superstition, or worse. There were no grievances behind such conflicts. It is interesting that the position was largely pushed by economists associated with the World Bank and this was not fortuitous. It was important that they established that the conflicts had nothing to do with the many social problems that adjustment had unleashed. In an article on rebel movements I advanced the thesis that, although many of these conflicts were fought in the bush, their roots were urban, which partly explained why these movements

failed to follow the Maoist dictum that guerrillas should be like fish in the water. Alienated from the peasants – who did not share their grievances – many of the movements turned on the peasants and inflicted what I then called the ‘Terrible Toll’ (Mkandawire, 2002).

A major pre-occupation by external elites was the problem of ‘elite capture’ of state policies. The moot point is, of course, whether these visiting elites would have condoned popular capture of the same. What we had here was an anti-elite elitism in which expatriate elites sought to circumvent their venal counterparts to directly deal with the ‘grassroots’ through participatory processes they funded and dominated. The denigration of local elites was not confined to political or economic elites but was extended to academic elites as well. The new elite anti-elitism is not about one social class dominating another, but about the quality and origin of the dominating class: especially its failure to be like the elite in the West. Elites in international organisations, transnational companies and NGOs fervently debated strategies of how to circumvent ‘elite capture’. The incessant sneering at the political class obscures the diversity among them, the collective action problems they face, and the role of unintended consequences. But even more, it prepared the moral grounds for military intervention in, and the external domination of, the African continent.

It was in this context that I presented a paper at the CODESRIA general assembly in 1995 entitled ‘Thinking about Developmental States in Africa’. A revised version was eventually published in the Cambridge Journal of Economics (Mkandawire 2001). The paper challenged the thesis asserting the impossibility of developmental states in Africa and provided evidence of performance by many states in the 1960s and 1970s that earned ‘developmental state’ credentials. This evidence of good performance in the past and the current wave of ‘recovery’ have led advocates of neopatrimonialism to reposition themselves by suggesting something called ‘developmental neopatrimonialism’ that borders on the oxymoronic, given their definition of neopatrimonialism.

Capitalism Without Domestic Capital

I argued above that one of the early concerns of African scholarship was about the problem of social or class differentiation. There was an awareness that we were dealing with capitalist economies, albeit incipient ones. Some of these analyses may have been marred by their teleological bent but they pointed to phenomena in our society that had social implications. At least the literature pointed to the centrality of the capitalist class in a capitalist society. Both the dominant analytical tools and their focus on individual choice, and the ideological predications of neoliberalism, have induced a study of capitalism in Africa without the prince – the capitalist as entrepreneur and political actor. The social analyses of the current boom seem never to rise above something about ‘Big Man’, ‘middle class’ or ‘consumers’.

The model that structural adjustment sought to impose was capitalist, which sought capitalism without local capitalists. It was supposed to overthrow the anti-capitalist policies of the nationalists with their idiosyncratic socialist ideologies. Both Public Choice and the Neopatrimonialism schools that dominated the study of Africa were against local elites. The new model suffered from ‘market fundamentalism’, which conflated pro-market with pro-business. The new policies were as anti-business (i.e. local business) as the ones they sought to overthrow, if not more. The new leaders – that the international community had hailed as leaders of ‘success’ stories – show a remarkably similar visceral disdain for local capitalists. The prime minister of Ethiopia even used words such as ‘rent-seekers’ to characterise Ethiopian business classes. As for Jerry Rawlings, one of his earliest acts was to have ‘market women’ accused of hoarding publicly whipped. Museveni vituperation of Uganda’s businessmen (and Africa in general, for that matter) is legendary.

New democracies

A few years after these debates, Africa was struck by the Huntington’s ‘Third Wave’ of democratisation (Huntington 1991). This came as a surprise for those of a linear bent for whom introducing democracies in poor countries was inherently wrong-headed. Free

elections and accountability of the government to the electorate have been introduced before the institutions of a modern state are fully secured' (Rose and Shin, 2001). The Asian experience with authoritarian rule has been used to argue against the 'premature democratisation' taking place in Africa and as a vindication of the Modernisation School view that democracy should enter the development agenda only after a threshold of material progress had been crossed. Given this historical experience, Africa was said to have the sequence all wrong as it was embarking on democracy without having acquired the prerequisites for democracy. For these reservations were made most vociferously about democratisation in Africa where it was felt that the 'logic of neopatrimonialism' of the continent would simply overwhelm democratic politics. This view was supported by quite a number of leading Africanists who argued that the best Africa could expect would be some kind of enlightened and benevolent dictatorship with developmental intentions. Some academics urged donors not to push much on the democratisation button. This viewpoint is still quite strongly held in certain circles, and is supported by the good economic performances of such countries as Ethiopia and Rwanda. The main argument against the possibility of democracy took a culturalist twist and argued that the peculiar concoction of governance that combined African economies of affection and western relationship combined a 'logic of neopatrimonialism' that rendered development and democracy impossible in Africa. This failed to take into account the fact that institutions are created by politics and that democratic politics can help shape the institutions of a modern state and that democracy can also be an instrument for economic development.

Parallel to this process of democratisation was the end of apartheid and the emergence of South Africa as a democracy. The fight against apartheid had taken up huge amounts of intra-African politics and diplomatic fights in the international arena where Africans kept the apartheid question at the forefront of international gatherings. But the fight also served as an excuse for various forms of local idiocies. The end of apartheid was the second high point

of African nationalism and the fulfilment of the mission of 'total liberation' of the continent. Regional politics turned towards the burning issues of the continent – economic development and peace.

The newly empowered social movements had hoped democratisation would place social justice at the top of the national agenda. However, the movements soon found out that the new political dispensation had ring-fenced a number of crucial institutions, leaving them with highly restricted policy space. I called this 'choiceless democracy' (Mkandawire 1999; Mkandawire 2004a; Mkandawire 2010). Donors held beliefs in development and policy that were ludicrously entrenched and inviolable and coded as 'consensus', despite the many protests of those upon whom the cure was to be dispensed. Such a pre-packaged 'consensus' did not facilitate dialogue in policy making. We should also recall that the adjustment model preferred more technocratic decision-making and as a consequence, the new support for democracy was embedded in notions of governance that are deeply sceptical if not antithetical to democracy.

Economic Recovery

The end of the fifty years began to show a light at the end of the tunnel. The 'Lost Decades' were coming to an end. Rates of growth began to pick up around 1995. As with all news there was no shortage of claimants to paternity. Two arguments have been advanced for the recovery. One is that adjustment is finally working. Considering that many countries have been implementing structural programmes for close to two decades the time lag does not suggest a terribly efficacious set of policies, although some bold souls, unfazed by discomfiting evidence, still argue that the timing simply reflected the true time-lag for the impact of policy reforms in the particular African conditions. If the IFIs had never really spelled out the time lag for their policies one could not really fault them for the making the claim. But as things stand, the institutions claimed their policies would work almost immediately and, almost since the launch of structural adjustment, the World Bank annually came up with a list of 'strong adjusters'. Between 1980 and 1990 something like sixteen countries qualified for the accolade. Many did not stay on

the list for more than three years. They strutted and fretted on this adjuster's stage and were heard no more. The other argument is that African countries were simply and finally implementing policies that they had hitherto rejected. This view goes against considerable amounts of academic literature suggesting that IMF policies lead to poor growth (Mkandawire and Soludo, 1999; Vreeland, 2002; World Bank, 2005). Indeed in the case of Africa, the World Bank, reviewing the growth experiences of the 1990s, was constrained to state:

The failure of growth in Africa – either of powerful and rapid growth in a single large country or in a substantial number of smaller ones – was a surprise. Despite good policy reforms, debt relief, continued high levels of official assistance, promising developments in governance, and a relatively supportive external climate, no take-off has ensued.

If, as suggested by the growth regressions, policies matter for growth, policy improvements should lead to higher growth. Both in the 1980s and 1990s, policies improved relative to other decades, but growth performance remained well below that of the 1960s and 1970s ... More recently, empirical research has argued that when a measure of “institutional quality” is included in cross-country regressions, the explanatory power of other variables, including all measures of “policies” becomes negligible ... This suggests that “good” institutions matter more for growth than “good” policies – that “institutions rule”.” (World Bank, 2005: 3)

In light of all this, it is difficult to see the link between orthodox policies and economic performance. Indeed, it can be argued that the collapse of the Washington consensus and the adoption of more heterodox and more nationally appropriate policies account for the growth in many African countries.

In their turn, some of the newer leaders have made claims that the recovery is the consequence of ‘good governance’ and respect for the ‘economic fundamentals’. Some of this is true. There has been a huge improvement in the governance of many African countries.

We have also seen an end to the proxy wars that cause so much suffering. By good governance I do not mean the technocratic capacity of governments to account for resource put at their disposal by donors but the realisation that their source of power is no longer military power or foreign sponsorship but the legitimacy earned from performing well in both the social and economic spheres. We have to consider other factors that are demonstrably related to the recovery. The first of these is the improved terms of trade, which have stimulated investment in mining. Some have characterised this rather long phase of good terms of trade as the 'super-cycle'. The second factor behind the recovery has been the investment in infrastructure and especially telecommunications. Both of these forms of investment have little to do with structural adjustment, macroeconomic policies, or 'good governance' as they are resource or 'technology-driven'. Here the 'China' and 'India' factors play a significant role. There can also be no doubt that the China factor is making a huge difference, not only because it has brought infrastructure back to the aid agenda but because it has led to the decoupling of African economies from slow-growing Europe and coupling to the more dynamic Asian economies. Debt relief and end of debt overhang always played an important role in some countries.

We should however not be complacent about this recovery. First, one obvious problem is that a number of drivers behind the recovery were one-off events and unlikely to be repeated in the immediate future. One of these was the privatisation and technology-driven investment in telecommunications. We already are witnessing a tapering off of such investments. Second, the reliance on external factors, especially the demand for our raw materials, reveals how little we have achieved in terms of industrialisation and export diversification; this also demonstrates the volatility and vulnerability of our economies. Second, despite the good growth rate during the last decade, many countries in Africa have yet to reach the per capita incomes they had in the 1970s. It has taken twenty-eight years (in 2005) for Nigeria to reach the same per capita income it had in 1977 through a commodity-driven boom. All we can say about much of the recent growth is that we were

recovering or catching up with the past, but not with the rest of the world, so for Africa as a whole what we are witnessing is merely a process of 'recovery' and not really of 'catching up'. Third, this boom is accompanied by consumption booms that have kept savings in Africa low and that have increased the gap between investment and consumption. The neoclassical obsession with public or state induced waste in the private sphere (through pursuit of rent-seeking activities) has tended to underplay the wasteful and myopic patterns of consumption in the private sector. Fourth, the 'boom' is not generating employment at rates commensurate to the dramatic rates of urbanisation. Finally, the new policies are not redressing the legacy of structural adjustment.

Africa's Challenge and Prospects

What Next?

Thirty years on, the 'unholy trinity of poverty, ignorance and disease' still stalks the continent with impunity, unabated in any significant way by the enormous scientific and material progress that humanity has made this century. In some places the ravages of war and climate have pushed large numbers of people to levels of poverty that were unimaginable only a few decades ago. Today Africa has one third of all persons living below the poverty line – 300 million out of a billion world-wide: an increase of 150 million during the last two decades at a time when poverty in other major regions of the world is declining. The rising proportion of global poverty attributable to Africa has led the World Bank to talk about the 'Africanisation of world poverty' (White and Killick, 2001: 5).

As we enter the second half of the 100 years of African independence, a striking feature of Africa is still the poor social and economic political conditions of its people on a continent of vast natural resources and human potential. The continent has the largest number of countries classified as the 'Least Developed Countries'. The population living under poverty has increased over the last three decades. In some parts, gains in infant mortality and life expectancy

have been reversed. In light of all this we must not forget the humanity of those caught up in this seamless web of misery and we must remember the social nature of this web. Once we remember all it becomes obvious that we are faced with social phenomena to which the social sciences must allocate a substantial amount of time to shed light on the casual mechanisms that produce so much unnecessary suffering.

The Neglect of the Substantive Aspects of Democracy

In a rather odd way, the wave of democratisation was also accompanied by greater social inequality, most dramatically in the formerly socialist countries. In this wave there was initially little attention paid to equity and social rights. The process of holding elections took precedence over the substantive social outcomes of political choice. On a visit to Latin America in the latter 1980s, Claude Ake and I were surprised to find out that while we fretted about governance our Latin Americans were preoccupied with the problem of the governability of society. The view was that some of the horrors inflicted on society by the military could be blamed on society for making unreasonable demands on the economy and polity. The new discourse was for new forms of political organisation and interest articulation that did not waken the ghosts of militarism. The privileging of process over all other dimensions of democracy followed from the view that the formal aspects of democracy should not be encumbered by the substantive demands for social justice. In many ways the debate on democratisation also committed what Lynn Karl called the ‘fallacy of electoralism’, which privileges elections over all other dimensions of democracy. It is that that produced adjetified democracies – low intensity democracy, tropicalised democracy, choiceless democracy, etc.

Overcoming Maladjustment

By the mid-1990s there was a growing consensus that something had gone wrong with structural adjustment. African countries had adopted a whole range of reforms proposed to, or imposed on, them by the Washington institutions and yet economic growth remained anaemic.

Towards the end of the 'Lost Decades' there were open expressions of *mea culpa* by international institutions. Over the years the donor establishment has admitted to a number of errors of omission and commission. They admit that in 'getting prices right' they neglected institutions; they admit to the neglect of infrastructure and tertiary education; they admit they should not have lost sight of poverty; they admitted it was wrong to assume the 'driver's seat' in policy making; they admit that in many cases there was wrong sequencing in liberalisation, thus privatisation should not have taken place before the regulatory mechanism was in place; they admitted to excessive retrenchment of the State; they admit they overestimated the responsiveness to the withdrawal of the State from agricultural markets; they admit to overburdening national bureaucracies with unwieldy agenda; they now say they realise the model they imposed increased inequality; they admit financial liberalisation has not led to the expected increase in savings and has instead spurred consumption booms. I could go on: the list is long. However, with this recovery, we were urged not to dwell too much on the past.

What have been the cumulative effects of these errors? A proper diagnosis must have this as the point of departure. I would suggest that we need to be fully cognisant of the errors made in the past and their implication for today and the future. 'Hysteresis' is a phenomenon observed in some physical systems, by which changes in a property lag behind changes in an agent on which they depend, so that the value of the former at any moment depends on the manner of the previous variation of the latter. Economists increasingly use the concept to account for any 'path dependence' of the state of economic variables on the past history of the economic system or policies. Policy errors in the recent past can continue to have an effect on the performance of the economy long after policy failures are corrected. I would argue that the accretion of these errors has produced maladjusted economies that may not exploit the current conjuncture intelligently. We see that in the low levels of savings; in the disruption of production due to serious shortages of energy. We see that in the complaints by business about the lack

of skilled labour; we see that in the explosive levels of inequality and the conspicuous consumption celebrated by the shopping malls that have mushroomed everywhere in Africa; and we see that in the absence of national development plans and lack of state capacity to implement such plans by anaemic states produced by thoughtless and ideology-driven retrenchment of the State. And the desolate industrial zones with their abandoned or mothballed factories are a reminder of the de-industrialisation that Africa and underwent.

Industrialisation Once Again

One of the rallying cries of the struggle for independence was the 'right to industrialisation' during the 'Lost Decades'. African industrialisation suffered major setbacks as the continent witnessed widespread de-industrialisation. Quite remarkably, in the current debate about Africa's 'recovery', industrialisation remains off the agenda.

Africa is the last frontier of industrialisation. Whether measured by the share of industry in our GDP, or by industry value added per capita, or by the consumption of energy, Africa falls far behind the rest of the world. Quite remarkably, in much of the writing about the new boom there is hardly any mention of industrialisation. In almost all the reports about its 'recovery', Africa is portrayed as a source of raw materials and as a potential consumer of imported manufactured goods and services and not as an industrialised continent. If Wal-Mart goes to Asia to acquire consumer goods, it comes to Africa to sell imported goods. Demographic figures are touted not to underline the growth of the labour force but of consumers presumably living off aid money and rents from minerals. There is no mention of industrialisation and employment strategies in all this.

The New Imperialism

Many of these same challenges that provoked interest in problems of dependence and neo-colonialism have emerged once again. The era of structural adjustment has allowed levels of foreign interventions that were simply unimaginable at the height of the Dependence School. The talk about 'land grabbing' or the 'New Scramble for

Africa' clearly suggests that Africa is still up for grabs and points to the continued or renewed imperial interests in Africa's vast resources. If the colonial order was underpinned by the British navy, missionaries, trade and imperial law, today's order is underpinned by interventionism, philanthropy, globalisation and the 'Rule of Law'.

It is not that the West was completely oblivious of the problem of neo-colonialism. They now saw it coming from the East and were at great pains to advise the Africans to watch out for this new threat to their sovereignty.¹²

Recapturing our Resources

One major preoccupation of new states in Africa was the realisation that their people had not benefited from the natural resources of the continent. Governments struggled to get better returns for their resources: some renegotiated colonial agreements; some nationalised the mines; others joined resource cartels such as OPEC and CIPEC. Indeed, the 1990s was a period of resurgent resource nationalism. The collapse of commodities prices and structural adjustment put paid to resource nationalism. The element of bargaining that played an important role in negotiations for investment in the past has simply disappeared or is subdued as countries seek to raise their index on 'Doing Business' through deregulation that leaves the door open for the rapacious forms of transnational capital. Some countries have gone so far along this route that they do not even collect data on foreign investment for fear they may be seen as interfering with the market. Indeed, one of Africa's attractions as a source of natural resources is the *laissez-faire* ideology adopted by African countries in contrast to the 'resource nationalism' that

12 For an account of this finger pointing see Sautman and Hairong (2007). Jack Straw, Home Secretary from 1997 to 2001, Foreign Secretary from 2001 to 2006, and now Leader of the House of Commons, is cited as saying: "Most of what China has been doing in Africa today is what we did in Africa 150 years ago." In a similar vein a German Development Ministry official has said of China, "Our African partners really have to watch out that they will not be facing a new process of colonization." Both citations are from Sautman and Hairong (2007: 6).

has been resurgent and described as 'virulent' in other parts of the world, putting restrictions on ownership or rates of exploitation.

This supine stance towards transnational firms is apparently evidence of Africa's favourable attitude towards foreign investment. In an article with the potent rubric, 'Africa's Capitalist Revolution', Ethan Kapstein ventures to suggest that:

In one of the great ironies of history, Africa may well emerge from the current global recession as the only region in the world that remains committed to global capitalism. While the tired industrialized nations of the West are nationalizing their banks and engaging in various forms of protectionism, Africa remains open for business – promoting trade, foreign direct investment, and domestic entrepreneurship. (Kapstein 2009)

In addition to all this negotiations on behalf of African nations has been conducted by sclerotic states, with their hands tied by all kinds of conditionalities.

A few months ago I watched a video on how Zambia had lost billions during the current mineral booms because of the way the privatisation had been conducted and how, under pressure from the Washington institutions, it had adopted a tax regime that made peanuts from its massive copper exports. The depressing thing is that that same story can be told about many African countries that traded their natural wealth for a pittance. Now, if Africa is to rapidly industrialise, mobilisation of her human resources and vast mineral resources will play an important role. And this can only happen if we view our resources as important ingredients in a national project of economic development and structural change and not as merely a source of foreign exchange to be used to finance the seemingly insatiable appetite for consumer goods. In the new democracies, the elected representatives of the people must reassert their authority over these resources and renegotiate many crazy and often odious deals in which Switzerland exports more copper than Zambia.

There is an increasing sense of outrage and anger at this incredible robbery of our wealth, although it is yet to show up in considerable research in our universities. Reflecting the ill-at-ease with what is happening to Zambia's resources, today Zambia's leading daily lamented:

Since when has global capitalism been concerned about equality, fairness and genuine justice, or the lives of those it affected? From the days of mercantile capitalism and its slave trade, through classical colonialism with its crude extraction of raw materials from our countries, in today's neo-colonialism the situation of our people is basically or fundamentally the same—marginalised, exploited, ignorant, diseased, hungry and generally poor. (The Post, April 26, 2003 cited in Moss, Ramachandran, and Shah)

In a similar vein, The Business Times of Tanzania recently asked:

[W]hat is the percentage of the so-called 'economic contribution' of the mining companies to Tanzania vis-a-vis what they are reaping from their operations under decidedly lopsided agreements? True, the sector has grown rapidly since 1997. But, for whom has it been growing, pray? How much has Tanzania as a nation-state, and its impoverished people, gained from that growth? ... It is an officially sanctioned rape of Tanzania's mineral wealth. (cited in Moss, Ramachandran, and Shah 2005: 350)

Even the foreign financial press such as the Financial Times have joined the chorus, calling for Africans to get their act together and stop the haemorrhage.¹³

There are many programmes on how African countries should manage their resource revenues. The new emphasis is on 'sovereign funds' not as merely curbing the seemingly insatiable desire for foreign goods but also as a way of holding something in trust for a rainy day for future generations. There is also the very laudable demand

13 See the Financial Times Editorial "Zambia's tax losses Africans should join forces to combat transfer pricing", Apr 30, 2013.

for the transparent and prudent management of resources. Norway features as an example par excellence in this respect. What are often deliberately downplayed are Norwegian 'resource nationalism' and the collective control by Norwegians of their resources. It is also forgotten that the developmentalist imperative was much less binding for Norway than for many African countries. The challenge for Africa is not how much money we leave in foreign banks for our future generations but what levels of economic development we hand over to them. Our challenge, therefore, is not how to efficiently hoard our 'sovereign funds', but how to put them to productive, developmental and equitable use now.

During the era of privatisation one new focus at the time was the 'resource curse'. There was an ideological dimension to the debate about the 'resource curse'. Since they generated easy money for the State – an institution on which neo-liberal guns were aimed – resources through various rents were immediately seen as bad. Not only did access to resource rents strengthen the State against domestic social interests, but against foreign ones as well, as such rents reduced the traction of donor conditionalities on the recipient. Indeed, one of the often cited consequences of the 'resource curse' was the reluctance of resource economies to make economic reforms as imposed by Washington. Even well-managed economies such as Botswana did not score highly on the policy indices devised by the IMFs. The 'resource curse' discourse prepared the way for privatisation and for the weak negotiating position that African governments found themselves in.

The timing of the focus was strange as it occurred when the terms of trade had turned against the resource rich countries, and when the 'curse' was not that of having too much of a good thing but too little of it. Countries were being forced to enter into privatisation arrangements and into rewriting the mining laws in a manner that has cost the continent billions. It is as if the whole 'resource curse' focus was a ruse to take attention away from the daylight robbery being orchestrated by international organisations in the name of privatisation, institutional reform, liberalisation, and 'creating an

enabling environment' for investment.¹⁴ As it turns out, for many countries the real curse has been their inability to capture any of the new rents from their mineral wealth and the continued bleeding of these countries by rapacious capital, rather than the profligacy of their governments.

Collective Self-reliance Once Again

To address these challenges, Africa must, once again, take the project of regional cooperation seriously. One of the major forms of globalisation has been regionalism, through which, to protect themselves from the assault on their sovereignty, social models and cultures from forces of globalisation, nations have sacrificed some of their sovereignty to regional supranational authorities.

So far the pan-African project has not fared well. In retrospect, it was naive to believe that the motley of dictators would pursue a project which would diminish their powers in their respective territories (Mkandawire 2011). Pan-Africanism started as a social movement, although it was later captured by states. As Nyerere once suggested, the Organisation of African Union (OAU) had become a committee of dictators.

Territorial nationalism co-existed because pan-Africanism was given a statist interpretation that protected not only the territorial integrity of member states, but also the rights of the territorial potentates to lord it over their fellow citizens without any normative encumbrances from the pan-African project. In addition, pan-Africanism made virtually no material demands on the membership. It is telling that the single large investment by the African Union has been made by China in the form of the headquarters for the organisation. It is necessary that pan-Africanism is, once again, turned into an ideology of a social movement, this time more anchored in democratic politics than before. There has never been a viable federation of dictators. A new pan-Africanism must be democratically anchored and based on notions of solidarity and collective self-reliance.

14 For this restructuring of the international mining order see Campbell (2004).

Conclusion

By the end of the millennium the African continent had rid itself of colonialism. Mandela's memorable walk to freedom after years of incarceration symbolised the long and arduous journey the continent had traversed and the ultimate triumph of African nationalism. Looking back it is quite striking how much time was taken up by the preoccupation with the end of apartheid in pan-African affairs. Indeed, it was about the only issue over which there was unanimity in the halls of the OAU. And quite remarkably, few countries broke ranks in this specific struggle: many countries paid a heavy price as 'frontline states', while young African athletes walked away from the Olympic Games in protest against any violation of the boycott against South Africa. This was the ultimate achievement of African nationalism.

And yet, much remains to be done. Most specifically, the struggle against the scourges of 'the unholy trinity of ignorance, poverty and disease' is still with us. In terms of reflection and research, we ought to revisit some of the earlier concerns in Africa over inequality and neo-colonialism. The irony is that, today when the features of both structural dependence and class differentiation are most pronounced in our societies, much less attention is being paid to these issues in scholarly work.

In the past it was widely assumed and accepted that the means for development would be different from the ends of development and that countries would have to traverse the vale of tears of authoritarian rule, inequality and social injustice before they would enjoy both material progress and social justice. In such a view, social justice constituted end states of the development process and could not be part of the process itself. In too many cases it took the form of the proverbial pie in the sky, and it seems to me that the real challenge of development is how to promote the ends of democracy, equity and social inclusion with the means of democracy, equity and social inclusion. There can be no doubt that the enhancement of citizens' capabilities to choose the lives they have reason to

believe desirable will partly depend on material progress made by society at large. So in a sense, development is part of the arsenal of instruments for ensuring social justice. However, to what use a particular instrument is put will depend less on the instrument than on the intentions of the wielder of the instrument.

The current financial crisis has raised fundamental questions about the social and moral viability of that order. Once again, as happened with the Great Depression, we are reminded of Karl Polanyi's insistence that markets need social embedding, and that much that matters to human dignity and justice cannot be allowed to depend on a roulette; even less so on one that is loaded against the weak in society.

I have, in my lifetime witnessed huge changes in the continent despite some tragic reversals. I see no reasons for not believing Africa will do better in the future. I place much hope on the next generation. The mood among this generation is one of anger and impatience with the wasted time, or what they consider escapist blaming of outsiders. This 'can-do' mentality is refreshing. However, it needs to be informed by a better understanding of the world out there. The kind of naive cosmopolitan that one runs into is likely to be mugged by the reality of a highly hierarchical global order that views Africa as a vast reserve of natural resources and, increasingly, cheap labour. They are also likely to find that behind the rhetoric of cosmopolitan globalism are crass national and particularistic material interests. The danger then is that out of frustration this youth that has fought for human rights and democracy can be mobilised by more unsavoury ideologies of xenophobia and violence and religious fanaticism and ethnic chauvinism, or pushed individually towards criminal activities as seems to have happened in much of Central America.

Africa today is freer than it has ever been since independence. However, in this era of lowered vision, focus has been on the procedural aspects of holding elections. Much less attention has been paid to the social quality of the new democracy. Indeed, many of the new democracies have no clear social agenda and, in policy terms, have hewed closely to Washington consensus (Mkandawire

2004a). And so, the quality of many democracies leaves much to be desired: many of the new democracies remain fragile and potentially reversible, so vigilance is of the utmost importance. The structures that globalisation and economic policy making had set in place severely limited the reach of democracy by hiving off key centres of decision-making.

A debilitating consequence of the adjustment debacle has not only been the lowering of our vision, but also the assault on our collective ‘capacity to aspire’, to borrow an expression from Appadurai (2004), by confining adjustment to movements along a low growth path and by insisting that the low growth rates were a ‘success’.

I started off by asking the question: What did we expect from independence? I can’t find any more appropriate statement than the words of the Great Martyr for African Liberation, Patrice Lumumba:

The Republic of the Congo has been proclaimed, and our country is now in the hands of its own children.

Together, my brothers, my sisters, we are going to begin a new struggle, a sublime struggle, which will lead our country to peace, prosperity, and greatness.

Together, we are going to establish social justice and make sure everyone has just remuneration for his labour.

We must continue with that “sublime struggle”. We need a new discourse that is as evocative in its audacity and imagination as Nkrumah’s insistence that ‘Africa must unite’.

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Vote of Thanks For Thandika Mkandawire

By Professor Severin Rugumamu

Mr Vice Chancellor

2013 Julius Nyerere Distinguished Lecturer

Mwalimu Nyerere Professorial Chair in Pan-African Studies
Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me start by reassuring you, Professor Thandika Mkandawire, that we did not expect to hear anything less than what we actually heard – a brilliantly blunt and piercingly witty lecture. Your giant intellectual footprint is all over the development studies discourse. You have been particularly concerned with issues that have driven the development debate and have interrogated new frontiers of knowledge. On behalf of all the Fifth Julius Nyerere Intellectual Festival Celebrants and on my own behalf, I congratulate you and offer our profound thanks for a splendid job!

What a befitting lecture for a great occasion! The African Union Commission has designated 2013 the Year of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. Your brilliant reflections today have provided us with a comprehensive record of Africa's trials and tribulations toward securing continental unity, shared prosperity and lasting peace.

You have always picked the right intellectual fights and have won almost all of them. Let me illustrate with a few examples. First, consider your rigorous critique of the myth of neo-liberalism and the so-called Washington Consensus. The 2008/09 global financial crisis and the resulting Great Recession have vindicated you. The mantle of free markets, minimalist states, deregulation, low taxes and neo-liberalism is now in full disrepute. The unhinged speculation driven by capitalist greed and subsequent massive state interventions to save the financial system as well as nationalize some major multinational corporations has called into question the virtues of the rational economic actors and the free market model of development for African countries.

More pointedly, the recent report of the Commission on Growth and Development has concluded that “there are no recipes for sustainable development, just ingredients”.

Second, we are reminded of your relentless fight against the compartmentalization of development knowledge into single disciplinary analyses. You are live testimony to have stubbornly defied the mystifications surrounding economic development, growth, and the division of labor between economics, political science, geography, sociology, and history. You have tirelessly promoted the incontrovertible notion that development is a unitary process.

Third, consider your persistent advocacy of the primacy of politics in development and the key role you attribute to a democratic developmental state. You have argued that the state should strategically manage markets by pushing, cajoling, persuading, enticing and instructing a wide range of economic agents to go the prescribed way; and at times, the state should act when and where private agents either cannot or would not act to promote the broad national interest.

Fourth, consider your unflinching advocacy for the promotion of social safety programs in order to reduce poverty, inequality and exclusion. You have repeatedly urged African epistemic communities to rigorously study what sorts of national and international social policies and programs are most effective and how to target and improve the livelihoods of various vulnerable groups in society.

In all these and other intellectual battles, you have emerged the undisputed winner! Slowly but discernibly you have led the way in framing the theoretical and methodological terrain of development debate and discourse. The current realities and futures of the continent should now be developed by Africans and for Africans and without looking over their shoulders. You have passionately advocated research to be the lifeblood of the intellectual enterprise, a process through which ideas and insights, old and new are nurtured and nourished, tried and tested, developed and discarded. Your lecture today has amply demonstrated the laser-quality of your mind which allows you to pierce through many of the opacities of our time.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me once again, express our profound thanks to the Julius Nyerere Distinguished Lecturer, Professor Thandika Mkandawire and look forward to three days of intense intellectual engagement.

In the nineteen 60s and 70s, the University of Dar es salaam was recognised internationally as a great academic institution, and the site of anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, socialist studies and activism. With the onslaught of neo-liberalism beginning with Structural Adjustment Programmes in Tanzania in the mid 80s, the university was one of its prime targets; subjected to numerous pressures designed to extinguish the flames of revolutionary scholarship and activism. The establishment in 2008 of the Mwalimu Nyerere Chair on Pan – Africanism with Professor Issa Shivji as its first Chairman, and the annual Distinguished Nyerere Lectures Series inaugurating annual intellectual festivals was, in Professor Shivji's introduction to this volume of collected lectures, "the resurrection of radical Pan-Africanism at the University of Dar es salaam." The impact of the festivals and the lectures went well beyond the university community, as substantial number of the participants at these lectures and debates were citizen intellectuals, not part of the university community. The calibre of the distinguished lecturers speaks for itself; there could be no better representation of progressive African intellectuals honouring the legacy of Mwalimu Nyerere, than Professors Wole Soyinka, Samir Amin, Bereket Habte Selassie, Micere Githae Mugo and Thandika Mkandawire whose lectures are published in this book.



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